Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/wilmingtonsnovel03marsiala

THE

WILMINGTONS.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"TWO OLD MEN'S TALES," "EMILIA WYNDHAM,"

"MORDAUNT HALL," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,

GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1850.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SON,
ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

THE WILMINGTONS.

PART III.

CHAPTER VIII.

The twopenny-post of the next day brought the following billet to Mr. Wilmington, written upon a shabby scrap of paper, and sealed with a wafer :—

Mr. Craiglethorpe to Mr. Wilmington.

I think our account is simple enough, and requires no balancing. In the year 18— I remitted to you one hundred thousand pounds, for the safe arrival of which I had your acknowledgment. I

2202911

was a wealthy ninny in those days, and believed in honour, and gratitude, and friendship, and such nonsense. I told you to use the money, if you could benefit yourself by so doing; and that I should never ask you for anything but the principal.

I don't mean to go back from my word,—though I *am* so changed that neither you nor your wife know me. I thank heaven, I'm the same man as regards that: I never shuffled with a promise, and I never will. Please to pay the hundred thousand pounds into the house of Jones and Estcourt, Mincing-lane, as soon as convenient. Happening to have a balance in their hands, and they and their clerk happening to recollect me, I am in no immediate want for cash.

MILES CRAIGLETHORPE.

The paper fell from Mr. Wilmington's hands, and, turning pale as death, he sank back upon a sofa, and seemed ready to faint away.

His wife ran for some water.

"What's the matter?" said she.

"Matter enough!—Fool!—idiot that I was!" striking his forehead; "how could I be such a dolt—such a driveller? And you, woman, how could you be so mad as to persuade me?"

"And how could you," said she, for she had picked up the paper and read it, and looked as pale and frightened as he did,—"And how could you be so weak, and such a fool as to mind me? *I* didn't know him—how should I? I really thought him an impostor. But it *is* strange, when these Jones and Estcourts knew him directly, that you, his oldest friend, should not recognise him. Why didn't you tell me plainly, you knew it was he? Do you think I should have been such a fool as to give you the same advice in that case?"

He was silent. He sat there, bowed down with shame,—the cowardly shame of being found out, not the generous shame of awakened feeling.

She went on pouring forth that torrent of excul-

patory words which rush from the false mouth when the accuser within is clamouring, though no one without has made an attack.

"Such folly too!—As if I could have believed you would have been guilty of it. Why, if you knew him, everybody else would too. And then this Jones and Estcourt,—who'd have thought of his going to them, and their recognizing him?—Not I, when I didn't know him—how should I? But you did: and what, I wonder, is to be done now?"

"Good heavens! woman, will you never hold your tongue?" cried he at last, provoked beyond bearing, and rising from his chair in a passion. "Will you never have done? Why, you false and shameless creature, did you not almost *force* me into your scandalous and absurd plan of disavowing him? Did you not literally push me out of the room, just when my better nature was leading me rightly? And yet—good God! good God!" cried he, throwing up his arms in a piteous manner, "what would have become of me?

—what should I have done? Oh me! oh me!"

And groaning heavily, he again sank into his chair.

"You use me very scandalously, I'm sure, Mr. Wilmington," said his offended wife; "but that's always the way between man and woman. As soon as ever you selfish creatures have got yourselves into a scrape by your own folly, the first thing you do is to turn round upon your wives. I dare say you feel ready to beat me now. But what I did was for the best; and I don't see that all's lost yet. You may deny the identity still; and who knew him so well as you did? And as to the acknowledgment he talks of, he'd hardly time to receive it before he sailed; and if he did receive it, it must have been just at the time; and who knows but it's at the bottom of the sea, with the ship? He wasn't very likely to bring that, of all things, away in his pocket, at such a time."

"Woman!" said Mr. Wilmington, sternly.

But she met his reproachful glance with an undaunted look.

"If I hadn't still my doubts——" she began.

"Be quiet, will you, with your doubts and nonsense. It's no use denying it. You would'nt even suffer me to whisper it to yourself yesterday —recollect that, if you please. If we had looked the matter in the face, and not blinked at it like two fools, we might have considered what was best to be done. But it's not much use playing that game, Lizzy. He's the man; there is not the slightest doubt of it: and if you'd own the truth, you never from the first moment doubted it any more than I."

"And if I didn't," said she, "I wouldn't just go and own that *now*—now that the only excuse you can offer for what's done, is your hesitation as to the identity of the man—your fear of wronging your friend by acknowledging an impostor. I should humbly think that might be a better plan, than just going and writing yourself down a scoundrel; which, whatever you may please

to do for yourself, be kind enough not to do for me. *I* did not recognise him in the least—that I can positively assert, and will do to my dying day; and you may beat me for it, if you like."

"What would you advise me to do, then?"

"Oh, dear!—advise! I beg your pardon, my dear; I thought I advised like a fool and an idiot yesterday."

"Pooh! pooh! I beg your pardon, child; but, Lizzy, what did you say? What had I better write?"

"Write just this—that if you had had the least suspicion it was your old friend, you would have received him with open arms; but you did not recognise him; and could not believe in so *miraculous* an escape upon the bare word of a stranger,—that as for the money, it is invested—(that's true, isn't it?)—but you must expect to be satisfied of his identity by his producing your acknowledgment, before you place the coupons in his hands;—that those who earnestly desire a thing to be true, are more slow to believe, perhaps,

than mere indifferent people; but, that if he can but prove himself your friend, you will receive him with open arms. That comes twice over; but never mind. I can't find any other expression that sounds so striking," said she, handing him the paper upon which she had been writing; for she had sat down and penned these words as she was uttering them.

He looked at the paper and sighed heavily; but he had entered upon the evil way, and was so far involved in it, that it must have taken a far more courageous effort than it was in his power to make, to burst through and return to the path of truth and honour.

Poverty—abject poverty—that scaring phantom to weak minds—which urges to many a base and unprincipled deed—poverty—the dread of abject poverty, would have been of itself, enough to have stimulated him to perseverance in deceit and falsehood; but there was something more than the mere dread of poverty in that pale, haggard

face and trembling hand; something, even to his wife, inexplicable about him.

His terror, his embarrassment, his distress was so far greater, than the occasion, perplexing as it was, seemed to justify. True, he had to refund a very large sum, she knew; and she was not aware that the coupons of the concern, in which he had so wrongfully invested it, were safe in her husband's hands; but even under the mistaken idea that he would be called to pay down one hundred thousand pounds, she could not understand his excessive terror and distress.

The answer to the letter dictated by Mrs. Wilmington, came speedily. It was from a respectable solicitor, well known to every one of the parties, demanding the restitution of the hundred thousand pounds; the acknowledgment of the receipt of which, it is true, had perished in

the ship with Mr. Craiglethorpe's other papers; but of which there would not be the slightest difficulty to prove the receipt, as it had been paid into Mr. Wilmington's account at his bankers. The solicitor acknowledged, that in case Mr. Wilmington chose to stand to his denial, there might be a little time required to obtain legal proof; but as for his refusal to recognise Mr. Craiglethorpe's personal identity, that was what, it was hoped, would not be persisted in, as not the slightest doubt upon the subject existed in the minds of any single one of the numerous friends who had seen him.

The answer to this was cautious.

Mr. Wilmington declared his happiness in the conviction that Mr. Craiglethorpe was still living, but expressed no wish to meet him again. He inclosed a copy of Mr. Craiglethorpe's letter, authorizing him to make what use he pleased of the money; and informed the solicitor that the whole had been invested in a certain mining speculation, where it still lay, and that he was ready

to send the coupons which were in his hands to any place Mr. Craiglethorpe would choose to appoint. It is needless to trouble ourselves with the correspondence which ensued. Briefly, the coupons were handed over to Mr. Craiglethorpe, who, after a short inquiry, discovered them to be entirely valueless. Not a shilling could be obtained for them in the share-market, and the company had for some time ceased to *pretend* to make a dividend.

Sentiment, old friendship, disappointed affection,—such things had soon yielded in Mr. Craiglethorpe's mind to the excitement of money matters,—to the old habits of business; and his rage and vexation at finding the money he had counted upon all this time, thus reduced to a mere empty bubble, which burst upon the first touch, was indescribable.

But still it found no vent in words.

He took the coupons up, and locked them in his desk, with an expression in his eye which was terrible in its very calmness. The envelope which

contained them inclosed a letter from Mr. Wilmington, written in a somewhat different strain from the former ones. In it he expressed his regret at the unfortunate result of the speculation, and enlarging upon the large promises of future advantage held out by the undertaking, said, that he had hoped to have handed over to Mr. Craiglethorpe upon his return a doubled capital, instead of the mortifying result which he had been compelled to acknowledge. He added in vague terms a desire to make some compensation for his unfortunate and mistaken views upon this subject, but professed himself at present a poor man. Five thousand pounds, however, he would be happy to pay over to Mr. Craiglethorpe's banker, and trusted he might be able in a short time to do something more, &c.

"The scoundrel!" cried Mr. Craiglethorpe, for the first time giving vent to his fury upon the receipt of this letter. "The insulting rascal! —to offer me a dirty five thousand pounds out of the very money he and his infernal, artful son

have swindled me out of, while my poor nephew lay a dying! Times must be changed, indeed, my masters, before Craiglethorpe would accept your paltry offer. No, not if he were perishing for a morsel of bread! And times must be changed with you,—you rascally pretender!—before you would have dared to make such an offer to me. Five thousand, when you owe me a hundred thousand pounds!—and out of the money which ought to have been mine,—which is mine,—was mine,—would have been mine,—but for the confounded tricks of your son. Aye, and who knows what part you might have had in such things yourself? You are capable of anything. I know you now!—I know you both at last? Five thousand pounds from you!—rather sweep the streets first!"

He adhered to his resolution.

He did not quite descend to sweeping the streets; but having collected what little money he could,—the whole not amounting to above twelve hundred pounds,—he invested it in the

funds, and, the interest not being sufficient for his maintenance, he asked for and obtained a place as clerk in the house of his old friends Jones and Estcourt. There, with a sort of stern and placid submission to circumstances, he placed himself;—he, the once wealthy Mr. Craiglethorpe, as second clerk under Mr. Stanwell.

It seemed, in the bitterness of his soul, that the additional humiliation of thus entering a counting-house, where he had been known in days so widely different, was acceptable to him. He seemed to take pleasure in nursing his feelings of rage and hatred by thus having his fall and ruin, under its strongest aspect, daily before his eyes.

In vain would the rough, good-natured Jones, —in vain would the polished and cynical Mr. Estcourt, endeavour to overlook the distance that now separated them, and treat him upon terms of former intimacy and equality,—he would not suffer it. He overdid himself in the assumption of all the submission in tone and manner, &c.,

expected in a large house of business from the subordinates to their superiors.

He never for one instant forgot his place as second clerk, and he would suffer no one else to forget it. What would have been gall and wormwood to a less proud and vindictive spirit,—what would have been bitterest wormwood to his soul under other circumstances, was now pleasant;—it seemed some satisfaction to his soured and exasperated feelings, thus to feel, and thus to show to what he had been reduced by his *friend.*

The small, pale, wrinkled man, dressed in a complete suit of brown, his still brown but scanty hair, combed demurely over his temples; his figure bent and bowed, might be seen, the earliest of all the clerks, walking of a morning down Mincing-lane, and approaching the counting-house. He would enter, and take his place by Mr. Stanwell's desk, the first and the only one yet arrived, open his books with the utmost tranquillity, and settle himself doggedly to work. From this he never stirred till counting-house hours

were over. Sitting there writing, without, like the others, lifting his head from time to time to examine any one who might chance to enter, —indefatigable and untiring.

I remember going into that room upon business one day, and remarking him; for no one could pass him by unnoticed. Every head was raised, and looking about at something that happened to be going on,—but his remained, as I said, bent down; so that I could not see his eyes till the head clerk, Mr. Stanwell, happened to address him; and then he lifted up his face.

What a face it was! What a strange character it had. There were lines written there, as if fiery passion had for one brief moment swept across it; and as if a sense, ineffaceable, of wrong had remained written there. Yet the whole now so resolved, so calm. Stoicism it was not. It did not give you the idea that the feelings had been vanquished or subdued; but that they had been forced down—settled down—in all their first intensity.

I cannot describe such things well,—but it was a singular spectacle, and certainly not without interest. Deep feeling, of whatever nature, always touches upon the sublime.

He might, I believe, when counting-house hours were over, be seen going quietly down the streets to London Bridge,—then old London Bridge, and no very agreeable place for walking; but here he used to take the only recreation he seemed to allow himself. He would walk up and down, and watch the ships in the river.

He refused every invitation from his former friends, who were numerous, and all very sorry for him, and anxious to show their sense of the treatment he had received by every sort of attention. But he would accept of none. His was that species of pride which can bear every form of humiliation but that of accepting obligations from those once inferiors. This his haughty spirit refused absolutely to do. He was proud of his degradation to a clerk's place, because that was a means of disgracing the man who had reduced

him to it,—of publishing, as it were, to all the world, the baseness and ingratitude of the Wilmingtons. But further than this he would not go.

When his walk was over, he retired to very humble lodgings in one of the most obscure streets in the City, where he had taken two rooms, let by a very poor woman, and miserably furnished. Here he spent his evenings, sitting over a small fire in winter, or in summer by the empty fire-place; for he made no difference in seasons, and his chair was never moved from its accustomed spot.

He never amused himself in any way. Books he had never been known, in his best days, to take any pleasure in; and to the newspaper now he seemed equally indifferent. He never looked into it.

He sat there, evening after evening, always alone, and always unemployed. Lost, as it would seem, in thought. Sometimes it would seem as if he hardly did think, so quiet and impassible was his face.

He never slept in his chair, as other men in such lonesome circumstances would probably have done,—he was remarkably wakeful. He slept little even at night. I have heard the good woman he lived with say, that she used to hear him walking up and down his room many and many an hour after every one had long been gone to rest.

Such was the way he bore the sense of his injuries.

I believe it was the manner in which he thought he had been overreached by the son with respect to the will, which exasperated him still more than the ingratitude of the father. There is something in thus being deprived of a just inheritance, which I think irritates men more than any other way of being overreached. Partly, I suppose, because the deed is so utterly ineffaceable that nothing can possibly reverse that which the dead have done.

No change of circumstance can affect the will of him whose will upon earth is known no more,

and yet whose last act of will is charged with long trains of inevitable consequences, however unjust, however injurious. Whatever the suffering or the disappointment, the undeserved poverty, or worse the unjust prosperity which it administers;—it is there,—it is done,—it is irremediable.

People dwell upon these things with unmitigated vexation. That it is irremediable seems only to exasperate such feelings. The heart frets against what would not have been done, could the doer return—aye, but for five minutes, to undo his work. It seems impossible to submit with tolerable patience to what arose from mistake, not well-considered purpose.

And thus Craiglethorpe irritated himself with thinking of what poor Selwyn would have done, could he but have known the truth; of how bitterly he would regret the step he had been persuaded to take, could he but only be aware of the present position of his uncle, and the utter worthlessness of those for whose advantage this injustice had been done.

Time, far from allaying, only added strength to these feelings,—uncommunicated, locked up, buried, and festering in the heart.

But we will leave this unhappy man for a short time and refresh ourselves with scenes of innocence, worth, and happiness.

CHAPTER IX.

Amid the loveliness of the lovely Welsh mountains the house stands.

It is surrounded by precipices and woods hanging round fantastically, and beautifully tossed and tumbled together. Upon one side of the valley, a white, flashing waterfall comes rushing and foaming down the hill, bursting though the oaken and beechen copse, and falling and splashing and foaming over dark rock and stone, till it reaches the valley, and then, after bursting into innumerable small cataracts, at length seems to settle

into a smile, and gently meanders through the green meadows of the opening dale.

At the mouth of this valley, where it widens into a dale, is a most charming picture of rural prosperity and tranquillity. A sweet little Welsh village is scattered among the trees. The houses clambering up the sides of the hill, as it were, and peeping with their white gables, and glancing casement windows, amid the green branches. Every cottage has its garden, its high picturesque hedge full of briar and hawthorn, its moss-grown apple and pear-trees, its cherries shining scarlet under the leaves, its roses, and pinks, and tall hollyhocks and dahlias,—its wicket so neat, its bench at the door, its little porch,—its thin bed of thyme, its potatoes, its French beans, its currants and gooseberries hanging in profusion. All which I enumerate, to remind you of what you all, with pleasure, must have remarked in the neighbourhood of a large proprietor's abode, where wealth has been received as a charge and a deposit—where it has been spent upon the spot where it was

obtained,—where the poor have been taught to look up to the landlord as a kind and firm friend; righteous, merciful, and mild, but stern on occasion; whose aim was the diffusion of the true and good, steadily pursued by the successive labour of every day.

Such was the case here, and all was softened, sweetened, beautified, and adorned by the example of one by his side, who loved flowers, and children, and bees, and birds, and happiness, and innocent frolic and joy, and whose love of the beautiful in nature gradually diffused itself like the beams of some fair star, and shed an influence most gentle and benign upon everything around.

The dale contained some of the finest and richest land on that side of the island: it was laid out in moderately-sized farms, the homesteads of which were visible from time to time, and homestead fields,—whether rich green meadows, waving with clover and buttercups and feathered grass, or arable land glowing with yellow corn,—

bearing equal testimony to the excellent management of the whole.

"Like master like man" was a proverb exemplified here; for he, though so calm and quiet in his demeanour, was strenuous, industrious, indefatigable, in the pursuit of all that was rightest, wisest, kindest, best. Better landlord, better master, never existed. His wealth was a rich stream which fertilized wherever it flowed. Kindness, goodness, justice, consideration for others, utter freedom from every form of selfishness or self-seeking. Singleness of heart, in the full extent of its deep and exquisite meaning, shone in the countenance, spoke in the voice, was displayed in every action of that excellent and now most happy man.

> His was the generous spirit which, when brought
> Unto the task of real life, had wrought
> Ever upon the plan which pleased his childhood thought.

It had been the charm of Harry Wilmington's childhood,—for, of course, it is him of whom we speak,—thus to realise a life of active

tranquillity, if I may call it so. To live retired from the turmoil and bustle of the great world, with that nature, and that God who is best seen in these his beautiful works;—to dwell there, not as an idle enthusiast indulging his poetic vein,—not in the selfish enjoyment of all those forms of beauty so delightful to his heart,—but in its calm repose, feeling but the occasion for a higher activity than the bustle of the world affords:—for tranquil depth of thought,—for calm consideration of things,—for just estimates of what is good and what is evil, stripped of the vain outside under which they lie so often buried and concealed, and for the exercise of that wise but unbounded benevolence, which seemed the very master-spring of his being. Seeking real blessings,—not merely those of this world, precious as they are for those who need them,—but those far better even than the clean and well-ordered cottage,—the blazing hearth, the well-filled cupboard, and the health-rosy flock of little ones—unruffled tempers, sober habits, industry, God-

liness, and contentment, which under such right influence, we may rest almost sure will spring up.

He had now been married above three years, and had lived in Wales nearly the whole time since, almost the happiest as he was almost the best of men.

Never was man so beloved; his unassuming manners, bearing, like the gentle Duncan, his faculties so meekly,—his ready sympathies, his kind consideration for every one's feelings, as well as for every one's wants;—still more than his generous devotion to the general good, obtained for him, that warm attachment of the heart, which many, as good, as disinterested, as benevolent as he, for want of these engaging qualities, had failed to attain. He seemed to escape almost entirely those thorns and impediments which so often embarrass and torment the post of those resolute in good,—he seemed to have a faculty of winning affection, almost approaching to adoration in his inferiors;—he seemed to

move in an atmosphere of love,—an enjoyment which is heaven itself to any one,—judge then what it must have been to him, with his blighted, stunted, mortified feelings;—his affections so checked and thwarted, and perverted and misunderstood—he who used to be so little valued, so little esteemed, so little liked, to find himself thus universally beloved.

His mind was like a calm, clear sea, upon which the halcyon is brooding when the winds have lulled and the clouds have cleared away, and the blue face of heaven is reflected in the waters.

His happiness was extreme in the useful rural life he led,—exquisite in the society of his sweet, young wife; and all this enhanced by a deep, reverend, permanent, ever-loving sense of the presence and the guardianship of that great Being—that sublime Existence—without a real living faith and perception of which, the best human life is but a poor, flat, unprofitable tale.

He had done in this beautiful, quiet, yet

peopled retirement, that early for himself which, when done early, is *well* done;—he had not waited till sorrow, sickness, and old age had weaned him from the world to offer his heart to God.

He had done it in his bloom of manhood, whilst life was teeming with happiness, and youth and strength beating high in his bosom,—whilst his spirits were bright with cheerful anticipations, and everything around him and before him one tale of happiness,—whilst he was full of health and vigour, sheltered, hedged in, as it were, from fear or sorrow—rich, prosperous, innocent, and beloved. He had offered to God an unblemished sacrifice—a free, happy heart.

He had thought much and deeply upon things now he had the opportunity; and he had seriously strengthened, grounded, and fixed within himself, as a man, the religious feelings which his mother had impressed as a child.

And in this lay the root of his worth. It was this which gave that perseverance, that resolution,

that determination after the true good, which rendered his sweet and soft natural temper of such inappreciable value.

I need not tell you that Flavia was gay and happy as the day was long,—as happy as a human creature could be. I have, blessed be God, heard other young happy wives say what she could have said,—they almost trembled at their own happiness.

There would have been something wanting to the perfection of this lovely retirement, had it not been for the presence of this gay sweet creature. She seemed to glance through it as you may have seen a bright butterfly, or gay-coloured bird, suddenly raise the tone of a shady bower of trees. She was the bright spot the artist puts in his picture,—the small but beautiful tint which enhances all the rest.

She did this not only to her doting husband, but for everybody—her gaiety seemed to enliven the whole place. Johnson told Mrs. Thrale he loved to see her in bright colours—"insects

should be gay;"—this fair young creature seemed of the same opinion,—she loved to be gaily dressed; she loved to have others in bright colours; she gave away red cloaks to the old women, and pink and blue ribbons to the mothers for the children's hats; she it was who led every cottager about her to love flowers; they learned to love them for her sake, their gardens were full of them. Her own garden was a perfect wilderness of beauty, in which she loved to labour with her own hands; and never had she any new and choice plant, but the first thing was to multiply it as fast as possible, that every one might share in the enjoyment. She instituted flower prizes, and her school feasts were the most delightful, fanciful pretty things you ever saw: such a profusion of fruit and flowers,—such bright pretty things for prizes,—such rosy, merry children; a fiddler, and a pipe and tabor, and the little things jumping away, and she dancing among them and looking like the fairy queen.

She hated everything that was dull and dingy:

she loved the light and bright—she was a child of light.

She would laugh and say the cold browns, and the dust colours, and the dingy greys, were absolutely immoral colours for the poor,—they looked so like dirt; it was quite dangerous to accustom their eyes to them.

Certainly the bright colours she brought into fashion in her village, added unspeakably to the beauty of this green, bowery landscape.

Caroline lived with them.

Flavia loved Caroline tenderly, and honoured and revered her as we know of old,—and neither the love, nor the honour, nor the reverence, had at all diminished. Caroline was still the same,—that fine, noble, lofty creature, with those large dark eyes so calm, and that figure so commanding, it would have been too lofty, only that there was not the slightest pride or assumption of superiority in its unaffected dignity. It was the mere outward fashioning by the fine genius within.

Caroline was, without doubt, the one of the greatest intellectual power and of the strongest character of the three; and for this Flavia loved her, and Henry loved her. They were both far above that jealousy of superior mental gifts, which renders some incapable of estimating the value of such, in the near relations of our domestic life. Therefore, they both fully enjoyed her superiority. There was something each particularly rejoiced in;—he, in a firmness against which as against a rock he might lean, and thus acquire double strength for the exertion of his own powers; and she, as a child enjoys itself in the protection of its mother, in whose presence it casts aside all fear of danger, or thought of self-guardianship; and runs and frolics about, knowing it shall be restrained if necessary. Or, she was like some tall, stately oak overshading and sheltering her from the lurid sun;—under whose shadow she could flutter and play about at ease, regardless of the noonday heat.

In short,—for I really am getting as tedious as

my age would account for, but not you excuse,—never were three people so happily constituted to enjoy life together, and never were three friends so closely and warmly attached as were these three.

It did not seem, as you have found during poor Selwyn's life, that Caroline had attached herself very much to him. Certainly she had not been what is called in love. Probably the state of his health, the anticipation of his early death entertained by everybody, prevented this; but she had never during his lifetime admitted the addresses—not even tolerated the most distant approaches to courtship from any other; and after his death she would listen to nothing of the kind. Any allusion to the subject of her settling in life, seemed unpleasant to her; and though she made no declarations, it soon came to be commonly understood that Caroline did not intend to marry.

This persuasion certainly added to the affection Henry and Flavia felt for her. They looked upon her as their own—as one from whom in this world

they were never to be parted; and domestic affection is exceedingly increased by this impression.

One thing more, and I shall have finished my account of this very happy party. The young people were not as yet so blessed as to have children.

As is usually the case at first, they had wished it very much; but after a while they became reconciled to the idea of having none. Their love for each other was quite sufficient for them, and they were too busy to have time for regret, and too good to repine, that this one gift was denied, where so many were bestowed.

Thus then, they were living, at a distance from London. Correspondence with home was anything but very regular, and they were still in happy ignorance of all that had lately occurred.

The good old lady whom I have slightly mentioned as their aunt—great aunt—for she was the late Mrs. Wilmington's aunt, was at this time upon a visit to them.

She is one of my favourite old women, though she wasn't a very great favourite with everybody. She had retained too much of the severe notions of the old world morality, to be a very acceptable person in these slack and easy days; but the three loved and valued her very much.

She loved them all dearly; and when these dry, severe sort of people do bestow upon others their hardly-earned esteem and affection, they certainly give a great deal of pleasure, and obtain much affection in return. And so it was in this case.

Mrs. Vernon was a great favourite, and always most welcome at Lostwithiel—for she had the greatest sympathy, and took the highest interest in all that was going on there. She would look rather annoyed and disapproving, to be sure, at times, when Henry was, as she thought, too indulgent and lenient in his judgments upon the

youthful peccadilloes of some unfortunate urchin or other; for Mrs. Vernon had a prejudice against boys;—and she would look almost displeased when Flavia would persist in giving pink instead of dark green ribbons to her school girls. She said she was nourishing a taste for dress—a heinous fault in Mrs. Vernon's eyes—and even a taste for general extravagance, a still worse crime. Dark green would wear so much better. She was, I believe, right in the main, not only as regarded the danger and almost criminality of indulging extravagant inclinations, but with respect to their being some little danger in Flavia's proceedings; but she was much more alarmed at the extent of the danger thus incurred, than was necessary; and certainly her notions of what constituted culpable extravagance and love of dress, reached to an extent which would have made a very ugly world if carried to that extreme by people in general.

Mrs. Vernon had a very handsome fortune of her own, which was to be divided between Henry and Caroline.

It is a very fine afternoon in October. They have dined early, and have been out walking,—Mrs. Vernon still nearly as stout a walker as any one of them, though she is in her seventy-fifth year. They have been down to the village, and have been extremely busy, making arrangements for the feast of the women's club, which is to take place the next day. For the first object of all at Lostwithiel, as regarded the poor, was to cultivate habits of virtuous independence, to accustom them to look with something approaching to horror at the degradation of parish assistance—of being maintained at the expense of others; and one of their innumerable ways of making themselves useful, had been, by the encouragement of benefit societies, founded upon just principles and accurate calculations, for want of which care, be it said in passing, numbers of these excellent institutions have become bankrupt, and the system, I fear, falling into neglect.

Henry had instituted benefit societies both for men and women; and though he very much

deprecated the encouragement in the poor of those false claims upon the charity of others, which strikes at the root of the poor man's morality, and is in fact socialism in disguise, he was not hard or ungenerous. *Gifts* are not socialism; the endowments of societies for the benefit of the poor is not socialism; the eschewing approbation of the efforts made by each man to maintain his own family, by liberal but free loaning assistance to such societies is not socialism: it is Christian love which voluntarily bestows, and shares its advantages and its enjoyments with others. To be an honorary member of the club, and assist in its prosperity, and enlarge its means for allowances, was not contrary to his principles; and this he did in a most liberal manner yearly. The club was also an occasion for those festive, friendly meetings among the poor, for which I, as one, am so great an advocate. But as in higher life we require a system of chaperonage to keep the younger spirits in due order, and prevent the gay and innocent meeting from degenerating into

anything that strict morality might disapprove,—so I think, with regard to the lower classes, who are not as yet, in my opinion, sufficiently educated to exercise this sort of superintendence among themselves, it is very desirable that, as much as possible, their meetings for purposes of simple enjoyment, should be under the eye and with the copartnership of the higher; and upon that account, therefore, the system of honorary membership is also very desirable, as it gives a certain right and propriety to the presence and interference of the richer neighbours, without infringing upon that independence and dignity of the poor man, which every one ought to encourage and maintain.

So to-morrow the women's club feast is to be; and the inhabitants of the great house have all been down inspecting the preparations. There is a large room in the village, dedicated to these festive meetings, as well as serving as a convenient place for conducting the business of the parish. It was the one only good plan, I thought, in a

chartist village I once visited, that there was this kind of public room; so much better than always to have recourse to the alehouse for such matters.

The long table was already spread out, it reached the whole length of the room, and was covered with linen, the household manufacture of the village, spun by the women and woven by the village weaver. In this remote place, the primitive custom yet prevailed, of supplying their own wants as much as possible by their own industry; the system of exchanging had not reached here; homespun was the general wear, and there was no shop for cheap Manchester finery. The result was much domestic industry, and work for everybody; but I do not pretend to say whether the old plan we are leaving, or the new one which we are so rapidly adopting, be best. The earthenware upon the table was not, and could not be, of home manufacture; but because all could not be of home manufacture, was it well or ill done to make for themselves what they could

make, and buy from strangers what they could not make?

There was a large, well-arranged kitchen at the back of this great room, and here the women were busy roasting and baking, and preparing what had been provided for the grand day. Flavia and Caroline had been employed in dressing up the room with greens and paper flowers, and making it all very gay, and Mrs. Vernon had been sitting at the table, slipping coloured paper, and preparing materials for their work. And now they have done, and are hot and tired, and are come home to delicious tea.

The room they sit in is very pretty. The house was a long, rambling, picturesque-looking old house, built of a dark brick, relieved with stone work and oaken carvings, with large casement windows, with peaks and gables all along the roof, and little lattices peeping among the ivy, and vines, and beautiful large-leaved magnolias, for the size and beauty of which last the place was celebrated. It stood upon a swelling lawn,

of no great extent, which fell, green, and soft, and smooth as velvet, to the clear brawling river, and was backed by the dark precipices, copsewood, and trees that rose in profusion behind. The only alteration which Harry and Flavia had made in this old place, of which they were excessively fond, had been the indispensable one in their opinion, of bringing the large, rambling, drawing-room windows down to the ground; but they had effected this alteration with as little detriment to the antique appearance of the whole as possible.

The room was amply and comfortably furnished, but without any of that display of taste which betokens that the owners care much about these things. However, there were several fine old carved oaken chairs, and one or two rich old cabinets, and a great deal of valuable old family china, which had stood there for generations undisturbed, and which would have thrown the lovers of such things into extacy, but I don't think any one here very much cared for them,—

their life was too much occupied by business or enjoyment, for them to be curious in matters of this kind.

The only modern ornament which they had brought there was a collection of excellent pictures by living artists. Caroline loved art, and Henry loved to encourage actual, living, striving, men of genius;—genius, in any form, he held to be a precious, an inestimable thing; and he had great sympathy with the difficulties, and the vexations, and the sufferings, and pains of genius—at market; and therefore he felt that with his large income he had a right, and also that it was right, to increase his choice collection yearly, which he did by purchasing one or two pictures every spring.

He had a few painters peculiarly his favourites, but the two loveliest pictures in the room were by that delightful artist Collins, with whom we have become lately so well acquainted through the lovely portraiture of the man as depicted by his son. If all artists possessed his unaffected

piety, his simplicity and singleness of character, his directness of aim, his devotion of his talents to the best purposes, and, above all, that healthful yet poetic genius which threw its ideal over the scenes of homefelt daily life,—how precious! how moral! would art become; and the love of beauty, of which we hear so much, and the encouragement of an æsthetic taste among the lower orders, of which we hear more, become a real, genuine mode of moral improvement. Harry had no real taste for art, as art, perhaps,—he was truthful and simple in this as in everything; he did not understand the value of difficulties vanquished, he could only judge of effects produced; and of these the simple representations of the moral life he loved pleased him;—he delighted in Collins' pictures.

One of these he possessed was a beautiful sea-piece,—the sunshine gleaming upon the sinking waves, as they subside after a stormy day; the sands shining wet, after the receding tide; and a fisherman's boat just come to shore, the family

busy assisting to unlade it. Those who are acquainted with Collins' charming pictures will fancy the wife, the big boy in a red cap, the pretty simple children, the soft gleaming sky, and all the beauty of this enchanting picture; which was hung over the chimney-piece.

The other, which was reckoned still more beautiful, was a delightful picture of Welsh inland scenery,—the woods, the precipices, the brawling streams, all beautifully cast into strong light and shadow by the beams of a sinking sun. Harvest was going on, and the last yellow load being carried to the homestead. It is needless to say how lovely was the distribution of colours, tints, and lights, or the disposition of the figures that animated this sweet landscape.

The other pictures were all admirably well chosen, but had, every one—whoever the artist might be—something of the same character of rural truth, of peace and repose, which lent such a charm to those of Collins.

Everything the living picture this evening pre-

sented was in harmony with the rest. The window was still open to the lawn, and admitted the cool air of a very soft autumn night; but at a distance from it, the lamp was lighted upon the tea-table, and a bright wood-fire was blazing upon the hearth. Flavia was making tea, Caroline cutting bread and butter; Mrs. Vernon, with her hands in their quaint velvet mittens crossed before her, talking to the other two. They were cheerfully chatting about the approaching festival. Never was there such an interior of perfect peace and comfort.

With one exception.

There was one circumstance in Harry's life,—one dark thread which ran through it all,—one ingredient, which, whenever it happened to present itself to notice, was sure to embitter all the rest. He was bound by the nearest ties of social life to folly, if not to sin. And, alas! the influences of folly and sin extend to all within their sphere.

In everything in which his father was, or had

been concerned, the evil influence was there,—shedding a blight upon his joys, disturbing the inward peace he enjoyed, forming a subject of never-fading regret and anxiety. Separated as they now were, there had been an end to those innumerable small vexations which his father's vanity and extravagance had unceasingly occasioned in former days; but there was not, and could not be, an end to the serious anxiety he felt whenever his attention was called to that subject.

However, he banished these ideas as much as he could from his thoughts. Nothing he could do would be of the least use; and his father, he felt, must, for the present at least, be secured, through the enjoyment of the large income left him by Selwyn, from any distressing consequences of his inveterate wastefulness.

This evening it was only an accidental circumstance which had awakened a disagreeable chain of associations,—merely the looking over some papers, which had been hurriedly tied up together

the evening before he set out upon that journey into Cornwall, during his absence upon which Selwyn had died.

They had remained in a drawer of his writing-table unopened since then. Having a little leisure this evening, he had taken them out to examine them. He was sitting with a lighted candle in a remote corner of the room thus employed, whilst the ladies were chatting away.

Seeing he was busy, Caroline got up to take him his tea; and standing behind him, as she set it down upon the table, cast a look upon the paper which lay before him. It was a sheet with a line or two at top written in her father's hand, and below it a variety of different characters—attempts at imitating a variety of hands, as it would seem. Henry turned round to look who it was that stood behind him; seeing it was Caroline, he gave her one sudden, painful, suspicious glance, and then rising with a disturbed countenance, crumpled the paper up in both hands, and walking to the fire,

threw it in, and watched it till it was entirely consumed.

Whilst Caroline thoughtfully returned to her seat, with an expression of doubt, distrust, and disquietude upon her face, her brother went back to the writing-table; and, as if unable to pursue his occupation that night, pushed his papers into the drawer, and went and sat down upon a sofa at some distance, moody and thoughtful.

It was one of those pangs of dissatisfaction and distrust which his father's proceedings were so apt to occasion; but the feeling passed presently away, and, after half-an-hour or so, he drew a chair to the table, at which they were now all at work, and asked whether they would have any reading to-night. There was a joyful acquiescence, and he took the book they were engaged in and began to read; and now and then he turned and stirred the fire, or trimmed the lamp. The brief uneasiness was over: he felt so *very* happy.

CHAPTER X.

I BELIEVE it was about eleven o'clock, and they were just lighting their candles and preparing to go to bed, when they were startled by the sound of a carriage rapidly approaching, and a loud ring at the hall bell.

The door was heard to open, and the rattling steps of a post-chaise to be let down; two persons were heard coming into the house, and the door was shut behind them. The footman entered,

and said two men wanted to speak to his master for a moment.

"Show them in here," said Henry, something startled, as one always is by the appearance of strangers at an unusual hour of the night; "what business can have brought them so late?"

"Will you please to walk in," said the footman to the men.

"Are the ladies there?" was asked in a hoarse, rather rough voice.

"Yes, to be sure, it's the drawing-room."

"Better ask your master to come out and speak to us here, or in some other room."

"What great secret can it be?" said Flavia, laughing, "that we are not to be allowed to hear. Go to them, Henry, for goodness sake—some horrid justice's business or other—I hope nothing very bad."

Caroline looked uneasy, as she said, "What can it be? I hope nothing bad can have hap-

pened in the neighbourhood. It is so odd for them to come at this time of night."

"And that man's a constable, by his coat," said Flavia, laughing again.

Henry had in the mean time entered the hall.

The man who had just spoken only waited till he had advanced a few steps, and then crossing the hall hastily towards him, laid his hand upon his shoulder, and said,

"I arrest you upon a charge of forging a will."

The unfeigned astonishment depicted upon Henry's countenance seemed to overpower every other feeling.

"I!—forgery of a will!—gentlemen, there must be a mistake here, at least," and he laughed with a something of contemptuous scorn, not common upon any occasion with him. But any man would feel irritated at being the subject of such a disagreeable mistake. "I! gentlemen! Who in the name of heaven can have accused me

of forging a will? Let me look at the warrant, if you please," he said, rather haughtily.

"Oh, there's no mistake, I believe," said the police officer.

"You are Mr. Henry Wilmington of Lostwithiel, the master of this house, I believe—it's all regular enough, the name is not so very common a one—I'm not much used to make such disagreeable blunders as this would amount to."

And he began to feel in his pocket for the warrant.

"And at whose suit," said Henry, whose colour began to change a little, "at whose suit am I attached for such a black and ignominious crime; forgery of a will! what will—I pray?"

"Forgery of the codicil to a will, if you like that better, and at the suit of Mr. Miles Craiglethorpe," was the answer.

"Craiglethorpe! Craiglethorpe!"

"Aye, sir, Miles Craiglethorpe,—Mr. Miles Craiglethorpe, late of Calcutta."

"Craiglethorpe! There is some mistake, I am

sure. The only Mr. Craiglethorpe I ever knew anything of, perished four years ago in the Sumatra."

"Yes, so some people thought, I believe," said the man, with a meaning look, "or they would not have had the impudence, I beg pardon, the courage I mean, to venture upon some things, —no, Mr. Craiglethorpe was not lost in the Sumatra, as people supposed—he's come back—he's appeared again. Everybody don't make him very welcome, it's said, but there's no help for it."

Henry put his hand to his forehead and rubbed his brow as if to recover his recollection. His thoughts were bewildered and all in confusion. He was a man of such delicate nerves, that they were always painfully shook and affected by any sudden blow—it was his infirmity, unhappy young man.

His evident confusion was not unmarked by the policeman; he drew his own conclusions from it.

"Mr. Craiglethorpe alive!" were the first words Henry uttered. "Show me the warrant."

The man gave it him; he opened and read it. There was no doubt at all of the matter. The warrant was made out at the suit of Mr. Miles Craiglethorpe, against Henry Wilmington, Esq., of Lostwithiel, Montgomeryshire; and for forgery of codicil to a will purporting to be that of the late Albert Selwyn, Esq., of Portugal-street, London. "Can it be possible? Mr. Craiglethorpe alive, and returned to England, and I never to have heard of it!"

And then rushed to his memory all that had passed—all that had been done of wrong, unhandsome, and unfair—painful subjects which, under the conviction of that gentleman's death, he had ventured to discard long ago from his his thoughts; but which now came rushing in like a tide. His vain remonstrances with his father, as to the investment of that large sum of money so confidingly entrusted to his friendship; his father's wilful obstinacy, and the vain extravagance of his

subsequent life—extravagance encreased by the culpable employment of this very money. *There* was the wrong—there was the irretrievable ignominy; as for the accusation about the will, he scarcely thought at this moment of that. Of course, Selwyn's property must be restored to Mr. Craiglethorpe—of course, it must go where he knew Selwyn always intended it should go; and where he would have taken care it did go, but for his belief that his uncle was dead. The charge of forgery in this whirlwind of rapid and confused thought, scarcely excited his attention. It was so utterly false, so preposterously absurd; to disprove it, he had but to speak and deny. Every man in the world would believe him upon his bare assurance as to that; little known as he might have been, every one who did know him, understood him well enough to be certain he was utterly incapable of such a crime as *that*.

After a few minutes, recovering from the extreme hurry of thought and pity, which this sudden announcement of Mr. Craiglethorpe's return had

occasioned; and resuming his usual fortitude and calmness, he turned to the two officers of the law, and said,—

"This is a very serious, but I must say, a most preposterous charge, gentlemen, and I think I may venture to say, that Mr. Craiglethorpe must have been a long time absent from England, and but a very short while returned, before he would have entertained such an idea for a moment. My character alone, I flatter myself, would be a sufficient refutation of any charge of this sort. No doubt he is sore about that unfortunate codicil. No one can blame him for that; but it would have been a matter easily settled, without having recourse to a measure, which I am at a loss to look upon in any light but as one purely vindictive. Mr. Craiglethorpe might have learned, if he had chosen to inquire, that neither my father nor I were men to profit by a testamentary paper, drawn up hastily under mistaken impressions."

"Then I am to understand," said the minister of the law, "that if Mr. Craiglethorpe would with-

draw this indictment, you'd be willing to agree to give up the whole property obtained under this codicil, said to be forged, without further trouble."

"That is an obnoxious way of putting the thing, sir," said Henry. "Not because this ill-considered and offensive charge has been made; but because, in my opinion, justice, in this case, demands the restitution—would such restitution be made."

"Justice *demands!*" said the other, with an equivocal sort of emphasis. "It strikes me, that it's a pity justice, as you call it, had not her demands satisfied immediately upon Mr. Craiglethorpe's return to England, and before this charge was made by him. There has been time enough for restitution, I take it, in between five and six months; I'm afraid it's rather too late now."

"Never too late, sir, to do what is right."

"Never too late, did you say, Mr. Wilmington? I'm afraid you may find this a mistake. But suppose you were to write to Mr. Craiglethorpe, and tell him what you are ready to do. It's too

late, I fear, to withdraw the indictment," he muttered to his companion, "but they might subtract the principal witnesses."

Henry did not hear him.

He was thinking.

The more he reflected upon the subject, the more the manifest injustice, after all his losses through their family, of retaining, for a moment longer than necessary, the inheritance which belonged, in right of every honourable man's intentions, to Mr. Craiglethorpe, was insupportable to him. Then he was deeply offended at the vindictive spirit which had prompted this preposterous attempt to fix a charge of forgery upon him; and that without even giving him an opportunity of doing what he thought fair and just to himself; but he was not accustomed to suffer the injurious conduct of others to influence his determination as to what was righteous and equitable with regard to them.

"I shall write to Mr. Craiglethorpe immediately," said he to the police officer, "and set

his mind at ease as far as regards my part of this inheritance. With my father there may be more difficulty, because there will be considerable sums, I fear, to refund. But I am rich,—at least my wife and a friend of mine are; and they will both, I am sure, be ready and willing to lend their assistance, so that this matter may be equitably arranged."

"Very good. Please to write all this to Mr. Craiglethorpe, and I will dispatch it by my messenger," said the wily thief-taker. It was part of his business to obtain evidence, so as to detect villainy and ensure the punishment of the guilty; and he had learned at last to take an absolute pleasure in this;—not that he was a bad, or particularly hard-hearted man, but he took pleasure, like many another man, in the mere excitement of hunting down game,—and his game was criminal offenders. He was likewise prompted to this by a rough sentiment of justice, founded on a bad opinion of mankind. In his opinion the chances were, that every one against whom a warrant was

obtained was guilty;—that is to say, ninety-nine out of a hundred of such. He knew how many criminals escaped, under the benevolent principle of the English criminal law of evidence, and he had formed a general conclusion that the ends of justice required more numerous convictions. He had seen so much triumphant exultation of wickedness in men who had escaped,—had known such evil effects produced by the uncertainty of conviction,—that he, of a harsh, though not cruel nature, had arrived at the conclusion, that it was much more desirable that the guilty should be convicted, than the innocent shielded; for he argued that, as I said before, out of every hundred attacked, may-be ninety-nine were guilty; of whom, perhaps, one-third got off: and then, said he, what was the loss of one innocent man among so many guilty, in comparison with the evil of such numerous escapes? He was not worthy, with such a sentiment as this, to be a minister of the benign maxims of our law.

In this instance he never thought of doubting

that Henry Wilmington was guilty of the crime charged against him; but he thought it would be rather difficult to carry the proof home. He was quite incapable of entering into the delicate conscientiousness of his feelings; and he considered this instantaneous proposal to abandon all claim upon the property, and refund, out of his private fortune, what his father might have expended, as the strongest evidence of a guilty conscience, driven to restitution by fear of consequences, that could exist. Certainly, it might have appeared suspicious to any man who did not know the relations between the families of the father and the son, that no offer of restitution of any kind had been made until this warrant was issued; and this, though Mr. Craiglethorpe had been nearly six months in England.

And so the thief-taker, drawing this conclusion, was desirous, of course, to put such a piece of evidence into the hands of the pursuer. He made no further remark as to the possibility of withdrawing the indictment, but advised

Henry to write immediately and make his offer.

"I agree with you," said Henry, "as to that; and if you will sit down here for a few minutes, and take a glass of wine," laying his hand upon the bell; "I will go into my own room, and write the letter, which may be immediately dispatched as you propose; and then I hope Mr. Craiglethorpe will be satisfied."

"If you please, sir," said Mr. Norton, "that wont *exactly* do. A glass of wine will be rather acceptable; but I think, if you see good, it may be as well to send for pen, ink, and paper here."

"No, I would rather go into my own room. The letter will require a little care in its composition, and I shall do it best alone."

"*I dare say!*"

"Well, sir?"

"Why, now, you can't suppose, Mr. Wilmington, that I am such a ninny as that,—that the first thing I do when I have caught my man is to let him walk quietly away in a big house like this,

full of all sorts of queer places, I'll be bound, and utterly unknown to me. You can't suppose me such a moon-calf as that, Mr. Henry Wilmington."

Henry's countenance changed. For the first time, in the hurry of his thoughts, the actual position in which he stood was realized. He was actually arrested under a criminal charge—a charge of the blackest dye. He was in the grasp of the law—he was a prisoner.

For a few moments he found it impossible to speak.

"Very disagreeable, I'm afraid. Very sorry, Mr. Wilmington; but you see necessity has no law,—or, rather, law is necessity. But we need make no fuss about it, if you'll only be ruled by me. We neither need startle the servants nor frighten the ladies, yet awhile, at least. If you'll only take my advice, send for your pen and ink, and write your letter here, I'll dispatch it; and we'll see what will come of it."

"The ladies!—My wife!—my sister!"—rushed

into poor Henry's thoughts; and the colour flushed, and then faded again, upon his altered cheek.

"Yes, yes,—you are right. I see." And he rang the bell.

His hand shook very much as he did so. He could not help shuddering,—his agitation for a moment was too overpowering. But he struggled hard against his weakness, and before the footman entered the room had been able to overcome the outward demonstration of it.

This agitated face, this changing colour, this trembling, shuddering frame,—even the desperate effort to recover his self-command,—all were noticed by the thief-taker as the infallible indications of guilt. Probably it would have been the same, had the case been reversed. By what means shall the innocent, in the hurry and distress of such a dreadful accusation, dispel suspicion, and persuade mankind that he is guiltless?

Hardened guilt can more easily play the part of injured innocence, than innocence itself, thus

bewildered by a totally unexpected charge. A clamorous declaration of innocence,—or pretended rage at being the object of suspicion,—the blush of shame covering the cheek at the very idea of being coupled with crime,—or wild terror at such a new, such a terrible position,—tears or rage,—calm dejection, or the boldness of conscious rectitude,—all and every one may be simulated by guilt; all and every one mistaken as the indications of guilt by an evil and suspicious eye.

But the servant opened the door; and Harry was by this time thinking alone of those he loved.

"William," he said, assuming as composed and indifferent an air as he found possible, "tell your mistress and the ladies that the business these gentlemen have come upon will detain me some hours. I beg of them all to go to bed. Bring some wine and cold meat here, and my writing things out of my room."

The servant closed the door, and the two men now, without being bid, drew themselves chairs,

and sat down by the fire; whilst Henry paced the room, endeavouring to compose his thoughts and review his situation.

Mr. Craiglethorpe had then returned.

He had a very perfect recollection of this gentleman,—as far as the impression made upon a boy of eleven or twelve years old can be called a perfect one. He remembered his small thin figure, his yellow shrivelled face, his black sharp eyes, and the sarcastic expression of his smile. But then he recollected, too, all sorts of good-natured things done to him as a child, and the great and important proofs of friendship and confidence given to his father.

Then he shuddered at the recollection of the wrong he had sustained, in the manner that large sum, thus generously confided, had been made use of; and then he lamented that want of thought in poor Selwyn, which he had always attributed to his weakness during his last moments, in having thus disposed of his property upon the evidence he had received, without the precaution

of entering a proviso in case of his uncle's return. And then he trembled to think that there might be a difficulty in persuading his father to surrender a large income which his former extravagance had rendered necessary to him, even though coerced by this terrible proceeding,—a proceeding which he still could not persuade himself to look upon in any other light than as a vindictive measure upon the part of an angry and harsh-tempered man. Suddenly the thought flashed across him, that his father and Mr. Craiglethorpe might already have met, and that his father had refused to do justice, and make restitution, and that this proceeding was an attempt to force his father to give way. But why attack *him*, Henry?

The perplexing question recurred,—why *him?* What could induce any man to make an accusation, at once so cruel and absurd, against him? What magistrate could be induced to entertain it, so far as even to issue a warrant upon it?

But then the dreadful thought arose,—issued it

was. Though innocent as the unborn infant, such a charge had been made; such a charge by some believed. His fair name had received a stain, his honour a blight, which nothing, not even the immediate withdrawal of the charge, could entirely obliterate.

That the charge would be immediately withdrawn, he did not for a moment doubt; but with his constitutional tendency to discouragement and depression, that it had ever been entertained, seemed to him a stigma that a life could not obliterate.

The footman now returned, bringing in the writing materials, and immediately afterwards a tray with cold roast beef, bread, ale, and wine. The eyes of the two legal officers twinkled at this good cheer; and drawing their chairs close to the table, without waiting to be invited, they sat down as if at home, and began to eat and drink with great appetite.

As soon as the door shut after the man, Henry, whilst these two regaled, clattered with their

knives and forks, filled their glasses, and munched, and munched, and munched, carrying on a conversation in a subdued tone, interrupted with sundry little short, hoarse, low laughs,—Henry sat down to write his letter to Mr. Craiglethorpe.

HENRY WILMINGTON TO MR. CRAIGLETHORPE.

I cannot but own to feeling hurt and surprised, that one, once my father's friend, and who has known me from a boy, after having been four years looked upon as dead, should upon his return, instead of making that return known to his friends, and giving them an opportunity of doing what they considered just, in the way of restitution,—that he should, I say, first make them aware of his existence by instituting one of the most cruel and unprovoked proceedings possible. If Mr. Craiglethorpe had possessed the justice and the candour to rely upon the honourable feelings of other men, he might have learned that the property of which he is endeavouring to gain posses-

sion by means so barbarous, as a criminal process, would have been his, upon the first intimation that he had returned; there cannot be a doubt upon my mind that, however the law might decide it between us, the property is equitably all his own. I am certain Selwyn would so have left it, had he not felt assured of his death. My claim upon it, I hereby promise as solemnly as man can do, to abandon immediately; my father, I am sure, will be ready to do justice upon his side; and if there should prove any difficulty in arranging the question of arrears, I have money and friends, and Mr. Craiglethorpe may rely upon it, *he* shall be no loser. All I would ask in return for this is, that this most false and slanderous charge against me may be instantly withdrawn. I blush to think that, however preposterous, I can have been subjected to it for an hour.

HENRY WILMINGTON.

He folded and sealed the letter.

Mr. Norton looked as if he would very much

like to have been made acquainted with its contents; but no proposal of the kind being made, he handed it to his companion, and told him to dispatch it to town by a messenger; and "take notice of the circumstances under which this letter was written," said he.

When the man had left the room, the officer told Henry bluntly that he intended to set forward without loss of time, and that he expected he should be ready to accompany him to town by four o'clock to-morrow morning. "For of course, you must be aware," he said, "that Mr. Craiglethorpe is bound over to prosecute; but your letter"—with a curious look—"will be admitted as *evidence*."

The truth flashed upon Henry's mind.

"Fool!" cried he, and was rushing to the door; "I will have the letter back—I insist upon having it back. Ah! I see the use that may be made of it. What do you mean?"—struggling with the thief-taker, who endeavoured to detain him. "I *will* have that letter back, bloodhound!—how dare you?"

But it was in vain. The man had sinews of iron, and hands like those of a Hercules. The small delicate form of his victim was perfectly powerless in his grasp. He felt this, and ended the ignoble struggle. He sighed, sat down, and his face became black as night.

This idea was intolerable. Hitherto there had not been a shade of self-reproach mingled in this gloomy business, and now he felt the rashness of the step he had taken, he cursed his own unguarded generosity, his heedless promptitude to act upon such a momentous occasion; and the rectitude of principle, and even the conviction of the disinterested and honourable nature of the sentiments which had prompted him, were powerless to console. There are occasions when we are allowed—nay, commanded, to unite the wisdom of the serpent with the gentleness of the dove; and he who has been hasty, rash, inconsiderate in moments of importance like this, even when urged by the most noble and generous motives, will not escape regret.

Manly steadiness and prudence, are high qualities; the firmness to stand upon self-defence in an evil hour, and when surrounded with dangers and difficulties, to be upon our guard, is a virtue. He who forsakes himself in circumstances such as these, will find cause for regret, almost for remorse.

Poor Harry! this generous promptitude to self-sacrifice, this utter disregard of his own interest, in comparison with what was right, just, and kind to others, had been one of his most adorable qualities. Pity that at this crisis of his destiny, for want of a little cool consideration of the consequences, he had done what was unquestionably right, in a manner so hasty and unwise, as to render it to himself a source of the greatest of evils. The next moments were very, very bitter.

The unhappy young man sank into a chair in a remote corner of the room, and abandoned himself at last to a train of the cruellest reflections. He saw the effect his unguarded offer might tend to produce, and he felt now assured that there

was no chance of its being accepted. The image of Mr. Craiglethorpe assumed a terrific aspect: he saw him hard, cold, determined, revengeful, pursuing his purpose with unflinching perseverance, and neither to be convinced nor persuaded, that the suspicions he had taken up could be utterly unfounded. And yet, upon what possible ground could these suspicions rest? Far from being in the house, Henry had not even been in London when the codicil was drawn up. Far from endeavouring even to influence his dispositions, he had not been there when Selwyn died. He had not even gone so far as to announce the death of his uncle to him; he had thought him too ill that morning to bear the shock. He had never, in any one single instance, or to any single person, given the slightest cause to suspect him of coveting that inheritance; he had always considered it, and spoken of it, as of course and as of right, Mr. Craiglethorpe's. He had known it to be so bequeathed; and it was with astonishment equal to that which his father almost clamorously

expressed, that he had found so sudden a change in the last dispositions that had been made.

And now he must go away from his home—carried away as a felon—be lodged in a common jail—be torn from his wife, his sister, his old friends. And for what? And what would become of them, in this unexampled scene of horror and distress? Could such things be possible? Could they really happen? Could it be true?—he! a felon. Could such things be, now-a-days—in these times—that an innocent, unsuspecting man could be arrested, disgraced, cast into a common jail—a man like him? And for a charge so utterly unfounded! His thoughts began to grow quite bewildered; he felt dizzy; he must be in a dream: he took his hands from before his face; he shook himself, he strove to awaken.

But there sat that hard-faced officer of justice, with his keen observing countenance, his arms folded, having finished his meal,—his eye fixed intently upon his victim, watching him.

Harry met this gaze, for the first time, with a

look of stern, haughty defiance. He knew at last in what sort of hands he was. He felt that he had been entrapped and betrayed. He turned away, and began to pace the room:

He was again lost in deep thought; but he was rallying his spirits, and soon became more composed. He was endeavouring to look the evil in the face; and, yielding no more to hasty impulses, to consider with as much composure as he possibly could, what would be best to do.

That he should be able to prove his innocence, when he was so perfectly and entirely innocent in thought, word, and deed, he could not doubt. What were criminal courts instituted for? What would judges and juries be, but a farce, if a man could be convicted of a crime with which he had not the slightest shadow of a connection? Evidence! What evidence could possibly be produced? And yet some appearance of evidence there must have been too. He was aware that, without a certain amount of evidence had been

produced, no magistrate would have been found to issue the warrant.

He began to endeavour to recollect all that had occurred upon the day when he last saw Selwyn.

The circumstances one by one were recollected as he mused, and gradually took form and connection. The absence of Charles,—his letting his father in,—his leaving him in the parlour,—the half-opened drawer filled with papers,—the bolt drawn back as his father came out of the room,—the hasty leave-taking, and he letting himself out, leaving his father there;—his leaving Selwyn in ignorance,—the letter he had written,—and then, a sudden recollection—the paper he had but that very night destroyed,—rose, as if in characters of fire, before him.

Then a cold tremor began slowly to creep through his veins,—a horror, as of great darkness, fell upon him. The hair upon his head seemed to rise, as a chillness, like that of death, passed over his skin. He clenched his fists for an instant, raised them above his head in one unguarded

moment of agonized despair, and muttering, "Oh, God! Oh, all-merciful God!" sunk down in a chair by the table; and, sinking his head upon his folded arms, remained there as if deprived of sense and motion.

Confused images of anguish now, like pale shadows, passed before his mental eye. He saw his young and lovely wife,—his darling, his delight, his pretty, gay, precious treasure,—he saw her with hair dishevelled, her face blurred and blistered with tears, wringing her hands in the agonies of despair, and calling frantically upon his name. He saw that pale sister,—her eyes tearless, her countenance as if turned to stone, the image of horror, standing there, endeavouring to keep down the shrieks of agony which seemed struggling for vent within her bosom. He saw the cold stony look of consternation in the face of the good but severe old aunt. He saw himself, pale and silent, pinioned, and walking with difficulty along. The face of a priest was looking into his; and the dark gloomy counte-

nances of the hangman and his assistants were there. He saw the scaffold,—and the multitudinous crowd; and he listened to the stifled execrations of men.

He was aroused from this dreadful vision,—for a vision it seemed almost to be,—he had been so long quiet and immoveable, that it would appear as if he had unconsciously been dosing,—by the thief-taker touching him on the elbow and saying,—

"Come, sir,—four o'clock,—time to be thinking of starting."

He sprung up, and opened his eyes wide. They were wild and distended.

"You've had a nap methinks—will do you good, sir. Come, come," for the expression of his countenance, no longer as he thought of hypocritical security, but of real anguish and despair,

aroused some feeling of pity. "Come, come, don't be so cast down. Many a worserer than you has got off before this time. The law has its chinks and its loop-holes. Whilst there's life there's hope. Here, sir, better take a glass of wine. And now I reckon it's time to be upon the march."

"No, no!" said Henry, putting away the wine with his hand; "time to be going, did you say? Where to, pray?"

"Come, come, sir, rouse yourself! you look scarcely half awake. It's a bad plan, believe me, to fall into them doses. The thing, you see, rushes upon a man like new, when he comes to himself,—betterer and stronger. I always advise a gentleman to keep awake, and look the thing well in the face, and think it well over, and make up his mind to it, before he allows himself to go to sleep. It comes so like a bewilderment, you see;—but come, come, you're shaking it off. With your leave I'll ring the bell, and order the chaise to the door. Of course, sir, you'll prefer

a chaise to a public conveyance, though it be at your own expense;—the charge can be nothing to you."

"Chaise! Where to?"

"Why to London,—to Newgate, to be sure; where else should you think I was going to take you, Mr. Wilmington?"

There was silence for a few minutes.

Then Henry said, in his own gentle, quiet, natural voice, "I am sure you will allow me to take leave of my wife, sister, and my good aunt, and give me an opportunity of breaking this affair to them myself."

"Why, sir, the ladies, I take it, are in bed; and you see, I mus'nt lose sight of you."

The colour again flashed over the pale cheek, and strange fire flashed from that usually mild eye; he set his teeth, he clenched his fists, till the nails seemed almost to pierce the hands;—then, with a desperate effort again mastering himself, he said,—

"You can stand at the door, if you please, and

I will pledge you my word, as a gentleman and a man of honour, that I will not make the slightest attempt to escape."

"Will you pledge your word of honour that there's no second door to the rooms, and that the windows are sixteen feet from the ground. I should like that best. But I crave your pardon, sir,—I'm a rough hand, and it's my duty." There was that in the look which met the insulting beginning of his speech that melted even this man. "Sir, you shall do as you please. I will go upstairs and stand at the door."

"Are you awake, my dearest?"

"No, I have not been able to sleep. I have been wondering why you did not come to bed, and was listening to the opening and shutting of doors. What is it, Harry, dear?—Nothing very, very bad, I hope."

"My love—nay, lie down. Lay your head upon your pillow, Flavia." She obeyed without a word, terrified,—her large eyes fixed upon his face. "My dear . . . . ."

He choked a little,—he wanted breath,—he struggled with the obstruction in his throat. He spoke again in a very low voice.

"My darling,—sweet and lovely, and delicate and beautiful, and everything most enchanting as you are,—you are more even than all that to me. Flavia, my life, you have a brave heart within, and you know, love, and trust your God. Look to him now, precious treasure of my heart,—for the affliction that is come upon us is heavy indeed. But there *is* another and a better world, my love."

"Merciful Heaven!" starting up with dismay in every feature; "Harry! Harry! what dreadful thing has happened?"

"Lie down again, my dearest;—lay your head down, Flavia! . . . . I must go away from you for a little while."

"But, Harry, that is very grievous,—but that's not all. I see by your face, it's not all," and she began to shudder and tremble.

"No, my sweetest, it's not all."

"Where are you going to?—What are you going for?—and for how long?—Speak! speak!"

She was starting up again, but he tried to keep her still. "Hush," he said, in a low voice, "your husband is arrested." She uttered a cry.

"For what? Goodness!—goodness! speak, what?"

"A criminal charge,—for the forgery of a will."

She burst into a loud hysterical laugh.

"Ridiculous!—laughable! Who could invent such an absurd tale? It's a trick,—it's a farce,—it's a mystification!" and she continued to laugh.

"Don't laugh, my Flavia!—pray don't, if you can help it!" he said, with a look of intense pain. "I would rather see you weep a few whole-

some tears. Dear creature, weep for me, for I am about to be carried to prison, my love."

The words produced the effect he intended. She ceased this frightful laughing and looked him steadily in the face as he went on.

"And if you would help me, and comfort me, and console me, my saint and angel, in this dreadful hour, you will be calm, and courageous, and confiding, and have faith in me and heaven."

"But who can have made such a charge? and who have entertained it? and upon what possible grounds?"

"Still I do not know. There are some terrible surmises in my mind, I own to you, as to the chain of constructive evidence which may possibly be brought against me. It will not be quite so easy to prove my innocence, as I at first thought, but you will not therefore suspect me of being guilty," said he, with a tender melancholy smile.

Upon which she sprang up from her bed, threw

her arms round his neck, and burst into a flood of tears. He let her weep upon his bosom for some time, gently embracing her, and bending down and kissing her hair, which fell down over her shoulders, for her little night-cap had fallen off, and two or three tears rolled down his own cheeks, and refreshed his poor heart, like rain drops in the arid desert.

She wept long, and by this she was relieved from the first paroxysm of distress, and she became more herself; and her first instinct upon recovering recollection, her first wish, her first endeavour, was to subdue her passion of grief, and be a support and comfort to her husband.

So she disentangled herself gently from his arms, threw on her dressing-gown, pushed her feet into her slippers, and said as quietly as she could, but with a tenderness inexpressible in her trembling voice,

"Tell me what I am to do to help you; does Caroline know?"

"Not yet; I came to you first."

"Will you go to her? No don't, she shall come here—don't go away till you meet—I will just step across the passage and beg her to come to us—stay here, Harry."

"There is some one at the door. Put on your shawl and just twist up your hair," said he, touching it with a sigh, "and let us go to her together."

She did not seem to understand him, but mechanically obeyed.

And then he took her arm in his, and they both went to Caroline's room.

She had not gone to bed.

About five o'clock that morning, a post-chaise with three men in it, drawn by four horses, left the door of Lostwithiel; and about seven Flavia's carriage, with four horses likewise, followed.

The two young women with admirable fortitude had gone through all the necessary preparations

for their departure; had selected and packed up what would be necessary for Henry's comfort; had settled matters with the steward, arranged for supplies of money at the bankers, and for the care of those dependent upon their bounty.

The servants, with looks of horror and sympathy, went about mechanically doing as they were bidden, but seeming quite incapable of any exertion; but the two young women, though ghastly pale, and their hands trembling and limbs shaking, set about what was to be done and completed it: and then with a feeling almost like relief, the first slight alleviation of their horrible sufferings, they threw themselves into the chariot, sunk each into a corner, stretched out, and clasped each other's hands, and started forward in silence.

Mrs. Vernon was persuaded to stay behind, and follow them at the leisure, necessary to her age.

CHAPTER XI.

We left Mr. Craiglethorpe abandoning himself to his feelings, and yielding to his fate with a mixture of fortitude and deep vengeful resentment, which at once excites our admiration and regret. The fortitude with which this man, to whom the pursuit and the enjoyment of wealth had been the mainspring of existence, submitted thus to lose all, and sink into poverty and obscurity without a murmur,—the apparent simplicity with which

he had at once yielded to that alteration in his social position, which is, among the generality, the inevitable consequence of a great decline in wealth,—the determination with which he had resisted all those good-natured attempts on the part of others, to make him forget the change, and to persuade him that they still looked upon him as what he had been, not as he then was, would have touched upon the heroic, had the principle from which all this proceeded been pure.

Had it arisen from a sense of the high duty of submission and acquiescence to a wise and almighty hand, even had it proceeded from a genuine and dignified contempt for these mere externals of life,—it would have been admirable; but, alas! the root of all these things was a bitter sense of wrong,—an unmitigated and an obstinate determination never to forgive and never to forget. These things gave him a sort of gloomy pleasure in nursing his resentful feelings, in casting the cup of his adversity to the dogs, and in resisting

rather than welcoming any alteration of his lot, which might mitigate the consequences of the injuries he had suffered.

All had sunk deep into his heart, yet he could not be properly said to be awaiting the moment of revenge; for it aggravated the bitterness of his mind, to feel that he was too utterly powerless to revenge or to punish. What were the rage or resentment of a poor, poverty-stricken, and helpless old man, to the prosperous Mr. Wilmington? He had shown how little he cared for his affection,—how utterly forgotten were all the ties of their ancient friendship. What use in reproaches or remonstrance,—who cared for them? —they were impotent and ridiculous.

It was the very sense of the impotency of his anger, which rendered it the more intense.

The life he had adopted I have before described; he made no change in it. The day was spent at his desk in the counting-house, the evening sitting alone in his humble lodging.

His thoughts were, as I have told you, scarcely

ever diverted from the wrongs over which he incessantly brooded; he had never been a reader in his youth; he cared not for matters of general interest; he had no enjoyment in the pursuits of science, and no genuine pleasure in those of art. To make money had been the employment, to spend it, the gratification of his life; that employment and that gratification taken away, there remained only in the place of ardent speculation and brilliant success, the humdrum, dirty routine of a clerk's life, undertaken to procure bread, in place of the excitement of jovial society, good cheer, magnificent display, and the consideration such things carry with them,—nothing. There was not one single object, unconnected with such a life, that could prove a source of genuine interest, so miserably poor was the inner chamber of the mind, so wretchedly destitute of objects.

Books, politics, literature, music, painting, and still less those great questions of social improvement which occupy many so ardently, and which, in the interest they awaken, carry with them

their own reward, were alike without interest for him.

Nothing of all this could withdraw him from his gloomy thoughts. And far less would such a man employ these hours of solitude in the attempt to deal with himself,—to subjugate to the better man within, the passions and the distorted views of the worser without us,—to purify and strengthen his heart,—to master his resentments, —to raise and dignify his wrongs.

There are but few men, I fear, who ever think of seriously attempting such things. Such ideas do not even cross the mind of the majority. Absorbed in the world's business or pleasure,—far from heeding, they do not even seem to know that such things are to be done, and that it ought to be the main business of life to do them.

In the meantime, Mr. Wilmington, after having

made one ineffectual attempt at assisting Mr. Craiglethorpe with what money he thought he could afford, or indeed, as he managed matters, had to bestow, suffered him to sink into the obscurity he seemed to desire, and let the disagreeable subject pass from his mind as much as he could.

He had, however, his little qualms of conscience now and then, just sufficient to make a man like him avoid casting his thoughts that way; he and his wife carefully abstained from alluding to it in their most confidential moments, and so they went on in their usual showy and unsatisfactory way of living, and dreamed not of account or retribution.

They had kept the fact of Mr. Craiglethorpe's return most carefully from Harry, who had now been absent from his father's house for some time. There was little satisfaction in visiting it, and he was extremely busy at Lostwithiel. At the time of Mr. Craiglethorpe's return, he had not been at Wimbledon for several months, and his father

never asked any of them to visit him during the six months following.

Correspondence was short,—letters were exchanged if any business matters required it, between Harry and his father, and a kind of exchange of short epistles was kept up between Lizzy and Caroline; but as neither took much interest in the doings of the other, it was proportionably languid. It was easy, therefore, to avoid any allusion to Mr. Craiglethorpe's return, and to everything which had occurred in consequence.

So matters stood, and so matters seemed as if they would go on.

When one evening Mr. Craiglethorpe was returning home, after office hours were over, and was proceeding through one of the narrow streets of the City. He was walking along musing as usual, his head bent down upon his breast, his

eyes fixed upon the stones, when he ran against a man who was going the opposite way.

"I beg your pardon," both said at once; and both lifting up their eyes simultaneously, simultaneously fell back, with an exclamation of astonishment.

"My stars!" cried the one. "Can it—no it can't;—yes, it is—never believe my eyes—else Mr.—nay, it cannot be—my stars! alive—Mr. Craiglethorpe!"

"Charles!" said the other.

"The same, sir; and most heartily, heartily glad to see you in old England again, sir. Why, we heard you were lost, sir,—and all of us believed it;—the newspapers you know, sir, every one of them said so."

"Newspapers *never* lie," said Mr. Craiglethorpe, quietly.

"Why, no, to be sure, sir—so one would think—they seem to know everything that goes on;—and every one of them said that the Sumatra was lost, and every soul on board had perished; and

we all knew you'd taken your passage in that ship, sir."

"Well, Charles, though it *was* in all the newspapers, for once, you see, all the papers were out; for here I am, and no mistake."

"No mistake, indeed, Mr. Craiglethorpe, and looking as like yourself as possible,—not aged in the least, sir, except—except——"

For Mr. Craiglethorpe had used to be particularly neatly and handsomely dressed, though plainly,—and now his clothes were mean and shabby.

"Oh, my coat, you mean—never mind that;—I'm the same man. But it does not answer, I find, to die, and then come back again in this world, Charles. One finds some dear friend has stepped into one's place; and then one's more free than welcome, you see. But come, I must have a little talk with you. I've got half-a-crown in my pocket, what say you to a glass of brandy and water, Charles? you used to like it well enough in times gone by, or you were belied."

"No, never, upon my honour, Mr. Craiglethorpe; never spirits, upon my word."

"Well, then, a pint of port shall it be? Come in here." And so saying, he turned into a neighbouring tavern, and asked for a private room.

"Sit down,—make yourself at home,—help yourself," said Mr. Craiglethorpe to the old serving man. But not choosing to sit down with him at the same board, and casting himself into an old arm chair by the fire-place.

Charles poured out a glass with some solemnity, and drank to Mr. Craiglethorpe's health and his happy return.

To which the other answered by a sort of nod, and then began.

"So you lost your poor young master, Charles, after all," said he.

"Ay, Mr. Craiglethorpe; poor young gentleman. Never had a day's health since I lived with him; but he went off more suddenly than any of us expected at last, as, no doubt, you've heard, and all particulars."

"No, I've heard nothing. You were with him when he died, poor fellow!"

"Ay, that was I, sir; and he went off quiet as a lamb. There was nobody by at the time but me, sir; for you know he had but one friend, and that was Mr. Henry Wilmington; he'd been with him and spent the day quite alone with him two, or say three, days before; for he was always very attentive to him, that I must say, was Master Harry, as we used to call him; and they used to be never tired, as I thought, of talking together. He'd send me out of the room, would Master Harry, often and often after poor Mr. Selwyn took to his bed; he'd say, 'Come, Charles, go out and get a turn, and leave your master to me.' And that day, too, soon after he came in, they sent me down into the far end of the city; and I was out a long time. When I came back poor master was alone, and looked low and sorrowful like. He told me Mr. Henry was gone done into Cornwall, about some business of his father's, and he sighed and said, 'He thinks we shall, but

I know we shall never meet again.' And then he turned upon his pillow, and lay a long time gazing upon the wall, very dull and melancholy."

"Perhaps it was because he had heard bad news," said Mr. Craiglethorpe; "that was the day, as stated in the codicil, that Mr. Harry told him of my death, poor fellow! I did'nt think he cared much about me; but that news, and the rest of it, most probably hastened his latter end. Did he mention me at all?"

"Aye, that did he, sir, and had a great love and reverence for you. Often and often have I heard him say you had been a true friend to him."

"I did my best, poor lad .... And so he was very dull and melancholy, and the news of the loss of the Sumatra and his poor uncle's death vexed him, did'nt you say so? and perhaps hastened his end, poor boy?"

"No, that I can take upon myself to say it did'nt do," answered Charles; "for he never heard of it."

"No!" cried Mr. Craiglethorpe, starting up from his chair. "What do you mean to say? Never heard of it!—Impossible!"

"Nay, sir, it's true. We had given over reading the papers to him, and I scarcely ever cast an eye upon them. How should *we* know anything about it, and Master Harry away too? Oh no, sir! don't vex yourself on that score; he departed quite easy about you, and almost the last words he said, as I was heaving up his head a little by putting my arm under his pillow, thinking to ease him, he turned his dying eyes, poor gentleman, to me, and said, 'Charles, when my good uncle comes home, you must tell him I remembered him in my last hour, and blessed him for his kindness to the poor orphan boy."

"He was dreaming; he was delirious! he knew it all the time!"

"Nay, sir, he was neither dreaming nor delirious; and now I remember, that very morning before, as he was winding up his watch, he said—'I'd give you this, Charles, with my other things,

which I suppose the executors will let you have as a matter of course, only I wish it to be given to my uncle."

"Did you get the watch?" said Mr. Craiglethorpe, who had now quietly resumed his chair, and sat there, with a strange expression upon his face—his eye fixed now upon Charles, now upon the carpet, as if meditating something.

"No, sir, not the watch; but I got the clothes. All the valuables, sir, were taken by the Wilmingtons, as residency legatees, I think they called it."

"And did you get no legacy?"

"Oh, yes, sir; all his servants were remembered in the will. We took very handsomely under it."

"Did you hear the will read?"

"No, sir; I was gone down to my brother's, for I happened to be very bad;—but I made 'em promise I should be sent for to the funeral. However I didn't get the letter in time, and when I came to town all was over, and the will read, and all settled, and the house shut up; but Mr. Wilmington sent for me, and paid me my legacy,

without deduction for legacy tax—as he did to all the rest;—and very handsome I thought it of him, sir."

"What was that you were telling me about the watch?" said Mr. Craiglethorpe; "are you sure the poor dear fellow was spared the shock of hearing of his poor uncle's death—because, when he was dying, you know, his memory might fail, and his thoughts be getting confused?"

"Bless you, sir! no more confused than yours are now. I'm certain he died without hearing the bad news, if that's any comfort to you—quite certain of it, Mr. Craiglethorpe."

"But what was that about the watch? Was he in bed?"

"Why, sir, it *is* touching—and must be touching to you, sir;—but you shall hear all about it. —No, sir, he wasn't in his bed just at that time, because, you see, he used to be got up a little every day to the last—and, bless your soul, he was as clear—as clear to the very last as you or I could be. He went off all on a sudden; there

was a complication, they said—and all thought him in a consumption, poor young gentleman! —but it was the heart most of all that was amiss; and he died of that at last, I believe."

"But about the watch."

"Why, it was that very morning—he died at night, sir, about nine o'clock—just going, as he breathed his last; but this might be about twelve or one—I'd got him up, and he was laid on his sofa; he seemed very ill, and panting worse than usual, poor soul!—but he held out his hand for his watch, which he was used to wind up himself, and I gave it him, and he wound it up and laid it upon the little table by him—considering, like, and reading the hour;—and then it was he said, 'Charles,' said he, 'I'd give you this watch with my other things, which I suppose the executors will let you have, as a matter of course—only, I wish it to be given to my uncle,' says he."

"Did he never say anything at all, as if he thought I was dead?"

"Bless you, Mr. Craiglethorpe, how should he!

for I am as positive as you sit there, he'd not an idea of it. Why, he talked of you a good deal more than ever all that day—people do when they are about to depart, they say. I only remember the watch in particular, because he was so kind to me about it; 'Charles, I'd give you that watch,' says he, 'but I wish it to be given to my uncle;' and oh! now I recollect, he said, 'Charles, when my uncle comes to England, which I calculate will be about the middle of next May, you go to him, and tell him how kind Mr. Harry Wilmington has been to me; and that I hope he'll be to him what he would have been to me if I'd lived.' I beg your pardon, sir, for not recollecting that before; but someway, being sure you were dead, put all such things out of my head; but I remember them now—they come up clear as day now I see you again, Mr. Craiglethorpe."

"Aye, aye; but could you swear to them?"

"Couldn't I? To be sure I could."

"And would?"

"And would, to be sure, if that would do any

good to anybody; particularly to that about the watch, word for word: and his dying speech, poor young gentleman, that I shall never forget,—no, not to *my* dying day."

A strange sort of shiver, a peculiar smile, malignant, yet satisfied, were all the signs of particular emotion that Mr. Craiglethorpe showed.

"Pour out another glass of wine, Charles," he said; which Charles deliberately did, whilst Mr. Craiglethorpe mused.

"You took a large legacy under the will. Was the will there as well as the codicil?"

"Oh, yes, to be sure, sir. Master had made the will six months before. The solicitor wanted me to sign as a witness; but master said, with his own kind smile, 'No, he can't do that, you know, Mr. Mason, because he's a five hundred pound legacy man, under the will, you know;' upon which I bowed lowly, as well I might. Ah! he was a good, generous master and man as ever lived."

"And you got more by the last will than that?"

"No; I beg your pardon, sir,—I said wrong if I said so. Only the legacy duty paid, sir. The legacies were the same, but Mr. Wilmington very handsomely paid the legacy duty for us all."

"Humph!" from Mr. Craiglethorpe.

Another pause; then he said,

"What are you doing in London, Charles? Where do you put up? Perhaps I shall want you again. I'm at No. 65, Pie-lane."

"Bless my stars, Mr. Craiglethorpe!"

"Never mind that; but don't you leave town without letting me know."

And so they parted.

CHAPTER XII.

Various and overwhelming were the emotions with which Mr. Craiglethorpe sought his home, but a sense of cruel exultation was the predominant one.

To find a crime where he had only feared a wrong—to exchange the place of helpless victim for that of triumphant avenger—to be no longer the subject of a vexatious error and want of care, which no man could greatly blame, after all—but

of a crime which would expose the perpetrator to the utmost vengeance of the law.

This was to rise from ignominous defeat to triumphant victory, from weakness to power, from insignificance to celebrity. There is something so humiliating in losing a fortune by a mistake, for which no one is very greatly to blame—to go out in silence, as it were—and something terribly exciting in having been the object of a great and tremendous crime.

Then revenge!—that revenge for which he panted, which is so sweet to the unregenerate heart of man!—revenge, a hope of which he had never ventured to indulge in, because it seemed so utterly out of his power, which would have given satisfaction to his embittered heart.

Oh, how that heart swelled as he mounted the little stairs, and entered his humble bed-room. No longer the proud but fallen, helpless, insignificant sufferer, but the mighty and the strong, holding in his hand the thunderbolt which should

dash his hard-hearted, haughty, prosperous enemies—prosperous and rich through his misfortunes—to very atoms.

Harry Wilmington!—the specious Harry Wilmington, whom every one conspired to praise, and whom he looked upon, and hated, and despised as a mean hypocritical pretender to generosity, taking advantage of the last hours of his friend,—his weakness and his affection,—to get possession of all his money at the eleventh hour, and enriched at his expense,—that cold, heartless, ungrateful man, whom he once had called his friend:—to have this Henry in his power, to have detected him in the commission of a detestable, a mean and contemptible crime; the Henry Wilmington, of whom every one spoke well, and when it had been very gall to his heart every time he had heard him so spoken of.

He walked up and down his little room; he rubbed his hands. It was the first moment of satisfaction he had known since his hapless return; and oh, how he enjoyed it! What a satanic

smile was on his lip! the bright gleam, as of the serpent, in his eye!

There was no mirror in that room to reflect him back his face; and, alas! there was no mental mirror to reflect him back his mind in that state of fiendish enjoyment.

Poor, pitiable creature!—he did not possess moral sense sufficient to feel how greatly, how dreadfully wrong he was.

He thought himself quite justified, because others were wrong; justified, because justice was concerned. Pitiless, hard, revengeful, exulting in the disgrace and downfall of others, it never crossed his mind that he might be committing still more frightful crimes than theirs.

For the first time, the next day Mr. Craiglethorpe was not to be seen at his desk.

Nor the next—nor the next.

He was indefatigably employed in hunting out evidence to prove the fact of which not the slightest doubt now crossed his mind,—that the codicil purporting to be Selwyn's was a forged one, and that it had been forged by Harry Wilmington.

Indeed this piece of justice must be done him: the fact of Selwyn having died in ignorance of his supposed fate, seemed to place it beyond dispute that the codicil must have been a forgery; and there was no other being upon earth to whom the slightest suspicion could attach but Harry.

It was years since he had seen Harry: had he but seen him, I believe he would have thought the thing impossible. But he remembered him only as a shy, rather dull boy, particularly quiet and well-behaved, whom he never much liked, and the idea of whom, since his return to England, had been associated with what he considered a mean, sneaking, dirty action. Had he seen him—could he have seen him, blinded by resentment and prejudiced as he was, I believe he could not—even *he* could not—have suspected him for an instant.

The links of truth hang together closely, and are curiously developed by Time. That the codicil had been forged seemed unquestionable; every minute circumstance confirmed the supposition, nay, rendered any other supposition impossible. That no one had visited Selwyn since the day that the report of the loss of the Sumatra reached London, who could by possibility have executed this paper, which, though brief, was done with extraordinary ingenuity and nicety,—seemed indisputable. Harry had gone up to his room; Harry had had the house to himself all that morning—all that day, for what anybody knew. He had been seen to go into the back-parlour, in a drawer of which Charles was able to swear the former will lay, to which the codicil was attached; and he was likewise able to swear, that in his hurry that very day, being sent by Mr. Selwyn to fetch a paper out of that drawer, he had left it half open, with the keys hanging in the lock, which keys were afterwards found lying upon the dining-room table.

The man having got his legacy, had no further interest in the will, and had never thought about the matter till the day he met Mr. Craiglethorpe; and concluding that Mr. Craiglethorpe was dead, thought it natural enough: indeed, was very well pleased that Mr. Henry Wilmington, whom he loved very much, should be so much benefited. Being out of town at the time the will was read, he had never heard the particulars, and, consequently, had never had his attention directed to the fact of Selwyn having died in ignorance of what was supposed to have happened.

When he returned to town the house was shut up, and his two fellow-servants gone, and the subject had never recurred to his mind. He thought Mr. Wilmington had behaved very handsomely, as regarded the legacy duty, and he returned to take possession of a little patrimony bequeathed to him by his father in Northamptonshire, and there to live upon the interest of his five hundred pounds.

After Mr. Craiglethorpe's death no one ap-

peared whose interest it was to dispute the codicil. Nobody thought of inquiring as to the fact of the maid servants having appended their signature. That was a thing the forger, whoever he was, had been forced to risk; but there seemed not the slightest probability of the question being raised.

As soon as Mr. Wilmington entered upon his office of executor, he had begun, as I have said, by paying off the servants,—well pleased to receive their money so soon, and the offer of two capital places,—one in Northumberland, the other in Devonshire,—with which Mr. Wilmington, in his kind consideration, as they thought, had taken care to provide them.

They never guessed or dreamed,—how should they?—that their names appeared as witnesses to the codicil; and they both very well recollected having signed a will, namely, the other.

But now they were hunted out by the indefatigable Mr. Craiglethorpe, and both found to be still living. One, indeed, was settled somewhere in the north, and could not easily be traced, but

the other was living in an obscure shop in the Borough.

The chain of evidence was thus completed. The names of the attesting witnesses were forged. The one who had been traced out was a girl who officiated in the kitchen, and answered the door in the absence of Charles, and she was ready to swear that she had attended the door the day the codicil purported to have been made, and that she had let no one in or out. Charles had let Mr. Henry Wilmington in, he must have let himself out.

Never was circumstantial evidence more complete. It seemed impossible to attribute the guilt of this forgery to any other living being.

Such was the evidence which Mr. Craiglethorpe had obtained. And when he had assured himself of this his satisfaction was perfectly barbarous.

He was not like the same man.

His frame had recovered its elasticity, his eye more than its usual brightness, his face more than its usual animation; he was in high spirits, and

tossed his clerk's place and all his unnatural humility to the winds. He now went in and out of the counting-house of Estcourt and Jones upon the old terms of an equal and a friend.

Not that he had let them into his secret,—that nothing would tempt him to do till the victim of his vengeance was in his hands. But he had told them in his way,—with thanks for the good turn they had done him,—that some circumstances had come to light which rendered this sort of place no longer necessary; and, assuming at once his usual air, and resuming his place in society, was just the same man as if the mortifications of the last six months had never been.

The gentlemen knew he was close and reserved by temper; they asked no questions; were happy to receive him upon the old terms, auguring from the satisfaction, nay, exhilaration of his manner, that it was no ordinary piece of good fortune which had befallen him.

It was not till the messenger arrived in London with the intelligence of Mr. Henry Wilmington's arrest, that Mr. Craiglethorpe indulged himself in the high gratification of confiding his story to his two friends, and communicating to them in a paroxysm of indignation, what he termed Harry Wilmington's impudent letter.

"The young scoundrel! Does he think to buy me off in this manner? Does he look upon me as such a fool, that I'm to be blinded by such an impudent attempt at imposition as this?—and why, my masters, I beg leave to say, if our conscience was so mighty delicate, was I suffered to lie six months upon a dunghill, till a tap upon the shoulder awakened our sleeping equities and fine feelings."

This was the only time that through the affair Mr. Craiglethorpe was known to give way to these sort of expressions, venting his passion in words. But nothing I believe that had occurred offended him so deeply, as the contempt, as he looked upon it, expressed of his understanding,

by this endeavour, as he thought, to cajole him with fine words.

Estcourt sneered and smiled sarcastically; Jones hemmed and hawed, and owned it was very bad.

And Mr. Craiglethorpe felt more unforgiving than ever.

The necessary legal ceremonies have been gone through, and Harry Wilmington, the innocent, is committed for felony.

What he felt during the hurried journey to town; what he felt when brought before the justice of the peace who had signed the warrant; what, when the mittimus being duly signed, he found himself once more in the hands of the constable, and upon his way to Newgate, it is difficult to describe. The dizziness, the strange bewilderment, the confusion of thought, that incredulity, that dreamy sense of unreality which overpowers

the mind when first overtaken by a calamity, the extremity of which exceeds all that the wildest imagination could have believed possible,—all this he felt; and owing to the extreme sensibility of his frame, in a degree that exceeded even the ordinary distraction of thought and feeling upon such an occasion.

As he had travelled rapidly along in the rolling post-chaise,—as familiar scenes, the trees, the hedges, the fields, so well known and so loved flew past him, rendered visible by the pale light of the dawn,—he could scarcely persuade himself that he was awake.

His eyes now fixed upon the window,—now turning to the two men between whom he was placed; he seemed endeavouring to understand, to realize what had passed. Had he really left them?—his wife, his sister, his friend? Had he left his home, his sweet Welsh home,—and was it possible—as a felon? as a criminal? Was he awake—should he awake?.....

The position in which he uneasily sat, the noise

and rattle of the jumbling vehicle, added to this distressing confusion of his senses. He wanted to be still—he wanted to breathe—to review his situation—to decide upon what should be done. He was innocent, perfectly innocent, not only of the actual commission of such a crime, but of the slightest suspicion that a crime by which he had so largely benefited had ever been committed. Then why, if so perfectly and purely innocent, was his cheek blanched and his hands quivering; why had he the aspect almost of one guilty?

Alas! alas! what cruel suspicions were his! The hope sometimes alternated with his painful fears, that after all no crime of the sort had really been committed.

Then his eye would brighten, the colour rise again to his face, and a glow of joy warm his poor heart. How easily he had suffered himself to be depressed—and what weakness he had shown—why hesitate as to his means of defence—his defence should be to deny the forgery in toto.

Why had he so readily admitted to himself that there had been any crime at all; oh! it was his base, cowardly, spiritless temper, which suffered him to sink under an accusation of this kind, instead of casting it back with indignation and defiance against his adversary.

When such thoughts took their turn, he would rise up from his desponding posture thrown back in the chaise, and would assume a more cheerful tone and manner, and endeavour to talk a little to his companions; but they were sleepy, and dozed away, leaving him to his own thoughts. Then fresh doubts and terrors,—terrors that made the blood freeze in his veins, would arise again, and his agonies, cramped, fettered, forced to be still there as he sat, would drive him almost distracted. In such distressing alternatives of thought and feeling, the long journey of twenty-four hours was completed, and he was brought before the justice of the peace who had signed the warrant. He had entered the room with a hope amounting almost to conviction, that he

should be able to disprove the fact of any crime at all having been committed, but he found, alas! that was not to be done. That the will was a forged one, did not, it was evident, in the opinion of those acquainted with all the circumstances, admit of a doubt.

And when Henry was informed of the reasons upon which this conviction was founded; was asked whether he had communicated the death of Mr. Craiglethorpe to his friend before he left London, with caution not to say anything that might criminate himself; and when, having answered in the negative, his own letter, which had been delivered by Charles to the justice unopened, was shown him, and the positive evidence of the servant communicated; struck to the heart by this unanswerable proof of the codicil being supposititious, his countenance suddenly fell, a deathly paleness came over his face, and his heart seemed almost to stand still. His dreadful but vague suspicions assumed a form of certainty, and the conviction was irresistibly borne in upon

his mind that one, and but one, living creature, could by possibility be the criminal,—and that man was his own father.

He leaned back against the wall in silence when the justice had concluded what he had to say. He had perceived with surprise, but a clear feeling of relief, that not one person who had come forward seemed to have the slightest idea that his father had been in the house that fatal morning.

No one was known to have been there but himself. The act must have been perpetrated during a certain period of time; for Charles, upon his return, had taken the keys of the drawer from the dining-room table, and carried them to his master, in whose possession they remained till his death.

There was no one to testify how Henry had been engaged whilst in the house; and even if there were—would he—could he—bring them forward? Could he justify himself, when his justification would lead to the inevitable convic-

tion of the being from whom he had received his own?

"Have you nothing to urge in your justification; no account to give of your way of spending the time during which this crime must have been committed?" asked the justice; who could not help regarding the unfortunate young man with compassion,—"Nothing?"

"I would rather say nothing till I have consulted with my legal adviser," was Henry's reply, speaking with hesitation and difficulty.

And the justice shook his head. Could there be a more palpable sign than this, of conscious guilt? In his opinion it amounted almost to an avowal.

"Then I fear there is nothing to be done but to write out the warrant for your committal to Newgate," he said with gravity.

He ordered his clerk to draw up the necessary paper; and then, handing it to the constable, he delivered the wretched young man to his custody.

The hope which had supported Henry had gradually yielded to conviction as the evidence was laid before him; and the cruel certainty had strengthened, as his recollection of every circumstance of that morning revived. He received the decision of the justice in gloomy silence; and, his soul bowed down with shame and sorrow, submitted to his fate, and left the room without again looking up.

And soon he approached the grim and threatening prison in which he was to be confined, and entered, innocent, yet bent to the earth by the sense of another's crime, this dreary abode of suffering and of sin. To share, innocent, yet heart-broken, and with a shuddering horror, the fate of many an audacious, hardened criminal, and many a penitent trembling culprit, in this earthly hell.

The huge iron-bound gates unclose, — the hackney-coach rolls along. The doors close behind him. Hope seems to be shut out, as they are heard barring and bolting him in. He in a

prison! A felon's abode. Bringing with him, miserable young man! a sense of innocence, but without the consolations of innocence,—guiltlessness, without the trust or the security of guiltlessness.

"Oh, Thou! who hast presented this bitter cup to my lips, give me courage and strength to drink it unshrinking to the dregs."

This short, brief, earnest prayer tranquillized him. It was muttered as he entered the cell, which was to be henceforward his chamber.

Then farewell hope, and with hope farewell fear.

So exclaims the young, generous, and courageous creature, in the last extremity of her distress; and thus felt Harry Wilmington, as he entered his small apartment, and the certainty that he was a prisoner was realised to him.

CHAPTER XIII.

The solicitor of the family had been sent for immediately upon Henry's arrival in London; and he now appeared.

He was an elderly man, with a remarkably kind and gentle expression of countenance, though his eye had that brightness and quickness which usually characterizes those belonging to a profession which requires a constant exercise of the watchful faculties.

He loved Harry Wilmington with the sincerest affection—that affection which such men feel for the children of those with whom they have been long connected in the intimate and confidential relation which exists between a solicitor and his client. But he also esteemed and respected him, for he had had abundance of opportunity for observing the genuine worth, the sterling honour, and undeviating rectitude of his character;—and he now entered the small chamber in which the unfortunate young man was confined, looking pale and agitated himself. But he held out his hand as he came in, with all the cordial heartiness of one who knew he *could* not be guilty.

Henry grasped it,—and there was a short silence. Neither of them, indeed, found it possible just then to speak.

Mr. Kingston was the first to break it.

"This is a strange, unaccountable business, my young friend," said he; "and I am heartily sorry that you should have got into such a scrape; but,

courage,—we must see and get you out of it. Old Craiglethorpe is a sharp customer, unquestionably, and very ingenious, as he appears to be a very vindictive man; but it will require a more than usual share of ingenuity I take it, to convict Mr. Henry Wilmington of a crime."

And he smiled, with what he intended to be a cheering smile.

But Harry's countenance responded not: his eyes seemed as if they could not meet those of his friend, which were fixed upon him. He kept them bent upon the floor—a struggle seemed going on within;—he grew paler—his looks betrayed a deadly sickness of the heart which oppressed him.

The solicitor looked at him with surprise, then with anxiety, and then with a look of horror, as he exclaimed,

"For Heaven's sake! Mr. Wilmington, look up. Don't look in that way;—your very face would be enough to convict you with men who did not know you as well as I do."

"Would it," said he, starting and looking up, and pressing one hand over his eyes, as if to dissipate the cloud which darkened them. The good solicitor still held the other in his.

"Would it? Why, to be sure it would. Come, young man, shake it off;—a little more courage—a little more spunk," the kind old man kept repeating, trying to smile all the time. "The only want you ever had in my eyes, was a little deficiency in this way, Master Harry. This is a very odious and painful business. It must be dreadful to a man of your feelings to find himself committed on a charge of felony; but accusation is not proof—and committal is not conviction, as many a worthy fellow has found reason to know.

"But, indeed," added he, more gravely and seriously, "you must *not* give way to the influence of a perhaps too sensitive feeling of things. You *must* rouse yourself—you *must* summon up your courage,—your resignation—all that is man *within* you—all those qualities for which your

friends esteem you. You *must* meet these unpleasant circumstances as they *must* be met."

He found his hand pressed as he said this; and then the unfortunate young man lifted up to him an eye, so full of tenderness, of gratitude, of affection, of unspeakable melancholy, that tears—unusual visitors to that calm and well-disciplined man, swelled to the eyes of the good solicitor, as he beheld him.

"Nay, this will never do," said he, hastily taking out his handkerchief. "I don't know what's the matter with me to-day. Come, come, let us sit down. Send for a dish of tea for your old friend, for I would rather have it than wine, when I am particularly interested; and let us set about and see what's best to be done for your defence. I mean to blow this miserable old fellow's accusation to atoms, as I feel sure before I have heard one word of the case."

They sat down.

But, far from what he expected, instead of a clear account of himself, and a distinct refutation

of every particular of the charge, Harry hesitated, changed colour, stammered, and seemed unwilling to speak.

The solicitor was again lost in amazement. He began to feel a little impatient. Nothing could shake his conviction of the young man's innocence; but he was provoked at all this apparent weakness of character, when the utmost decision and self-assertion were so necessary. "The point," he said, "to make is, to disprove the commission of any forgery having been committed at all. That is a much more complete and triumphant answer to the charge than the endeavour to prove you individually innocent; and that the codicil was *not* forged must be clear as daylight, because it must be true. It is impossible that it can be anything else but true."

Henry looked at him with a glazing, clouded eye, but answered nothing.

"Really, Mr. Henry!—really, at such a time! What can be the matter with you, sir? Forgive

me, but the importance of the case ..... I must beg ..... Rally your spirits, sir."

Silent still, and the cheek, the forehead, the lips, ashy pale.

Again Mr. Kingston eyed him earnestly, searchingly, anxiously, and his cheek began to grow pale too, and the light of his clear grey eye to darken. Yet the faith which the good have in the good still supported him.

He shook off the disagreeable, the insupportable feelings that seemed slowly creeping over him in spite of himself, chilling his enthusiastic confidence, and trying his faith and courage.

He sat looking at Henry for some time, bewildered more and more at his strange aspect and strange silence.

At last he said,—

"Time presses, Mr. Henry, and we must begin to take our measures. What have you to say? I beg of you to be explicit with me. How else is it possible, in the name of all that's good, that I can serve you? Put me in possession of

all the circumstances of that day upon which you are accused of having forged this supposed codicil just as they actually occurred, that is the first thing to be ascertained. Come," taking out a small portable silver inkstand and a roll of paper; "let me take notes of it. Still silent!—Mr. Henry Wilmington!" with a slight asperity in his tone; "let me beseech you not thus utterly to forsake yourself. Have you *nothing* to tell me?

"Nothing!" dropped from the pallid lips.

"Nothing! Good Heavens! Can you give no account of yourself that day? Tax your memory, sir. Endeavour to recollect where you were and what you were about at that time. The impossibility of your being guilty is to me so absolutely certain, that if I had seen you, as I thought, actually employed upon such a paper, I would not have believed my own senses. Character is much to a jury, but it is not all. The best exculpation is a clear account of how you were engaged during the time which elapsed from the moment you entered Mr. Selwyn's house up to

the time when he was informed of Mr. Craiglethorpe's demise,—a space of not more than eight-and-forty hours, as I understand."

"Do you not know?.....he.....never was informed of it?"

The solicitor started from his chair,—dismay, horror, astonishment written in every feature.

"How! what! Henry!—Do I hear aright?—What is it you are saying?"

"The truth, Mr. Kingston!—Selwyn died in ignorance of his uncle's death; I thought he knew it, but he never did."

"My God! My God!"

And the old man burst into a flood of tears. Quite overcome he sank into a chair, covered his face with his handkerchief, and sobbed like a child.

"My friend,—my excellent, worthy, kind friend!" said Harry, tenderly; and he endeavoured to take and press one of the thin withered hands which the old man was now pressing over his eyes.

He withdrew his hand, and looking piteously

at Henry said, "You! Oh, Henry! unsay that! I didn't hear rightly,—I couldn't hear rightly! Say it again. No, no, no!—don't say it again! It can't—it shan't be true."

Harry shook his head mournfully.

"Because I understand," continued Mr. Kingston, starting up again, "that the very preamble of the contested codicil declares, that upon account of the intelligence of the death of Mr. Craiglethorpe, that morning communicated to him by his dear friend Henry Wilmington....he....he, &c., &c. In the name of all that's good—you don't mean to say you never *did* tell him?"

"No; I never did."

"Why then you were nothing less than mad," cried the old man, bursting at last into a rage; "and what on earth could induce you, then? such folly is incredible. Why was it put in the preamble?"

Harry turned away. Perhaps of all the bitter moments of that night and day, this was the bitterest. He understood the implication. He saw

that his friend's confidence in his integrity had given way.

He walked to the thickly barred window; he stood a few minutes, irresolute, battling with himself. The trial was almost too great for his fortitude. Should he not?—to him, his friend, his adviser, at least?.... No; no, his resolution was taken. He stood a little while there to recover himself, and then returning to the table, sat down by his old friend, whose cheeks were by this time as white as his own, and said,—

"Though *I* did not,—some one else might."

"True," replied the other, in a hollow, broken voice; "but did they?—Heavens and earth! Mr. Henry, can't you see," recovering the usual energy of his manner; "the whole turns upon this. If it can be proved he died in ignorance of the loss of the ship, the codicil of course falls to nothing. Our outward defences are taken; we must fall back upon the other. You did not do it?"

He looked up—one look—it said everything—

it said, "And you!—can *you* ask that question of me?"

The answer was a sudden grasp of his hand, whilst the colour rose to the good old man's cheek again.

"Well then," said he, cheerfully, "it's a mysterious business, to be sure; but the first thing must be to exculpate you, and our best exculpation will be to hunt out the real offender; for that an offence has been committed, I am afraid, after what you tell me, there can be no doubt. So," again resuming his pen, "let us have as exact and minute an account of all you were doing with yourself that eight-and-forty hours, as your memory can possibly supply; and then trust me for hunting out evidence,—not only to support you in the affirmation of the truth, but likewise to convict the real criminal; one will help the other. Come, let me have your story first."

"I have no story to tell."

"What do you mean, my dear sir?" again

throwing down his pen, flinging himself back in his chair, and looking at him with astonishment. "Impossible!—Your memory cannot so entirely have failed you. You were in the house, unfortunately, that very day, and quite alone; for the old man servant, I find, went out; but he is ready to prove he let you in. And as to the girl who usually attended the door when he was absent, she never saw you go out. There is no evidence of how long you might or might not have been in the house, and have had it all to yourself as it were. Now you must tell me what really happened, and what you did with your time that morning, and so prove the impossibility of your having executed this cursed job; and perhaps you may remember seeing some one else about, who might have done it,—that.... How you shudder, sir!—how ill you look. Let me call and ask for a glass of wine for you;—what's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing—nothing; don't look at me;—don't heed me."

"Not heed you! Indeed, indeed, Henry Wilmington, you pain an old friend very much."

"Do I?"—and again a sweet melancholy smile—such a smile as innocent suffering, and innocent suffering alone, could have given—faintly passed over his face. "Do I? I am very sorry for it."

"Oh dear! oh dear! Shall we never begin. When did you hear of this old wretch's death first,—to begin at the beginning,—that morning of March the 25th, when the codicil is dated? for I have been to Doctors' Commons and ascertained all that."

Henry considered a little, and then said "Yes."

"Why, Mr. Henry, you need not be afraid of criminating yourself with me. Let me give you the maxim of a very eminent man in his branch of the profession: If you know yourself to be innocent, you cannot be too frank and even unguarded in your answers. His legal advisers can hardly let a man, under such circumstances, say too much for himself, for truth will out. If he is guilty, it is another story. But then, as another

eminent man, though in a lower grade of the profession, said,—"If a man is guilty, and will not confide it to me, it is impossible I can do anything for him."

Henry made no reply to this, but by turning away his face again to the window, so that its expression was concealed from Mr. Kingston, who, rather more coldly, went on.

"And you went that very morning down to Mr. Selwyn's, with the intention of disclosing this event to him, and you did not do it; and why did you not do it?"

"Because I found him extremely ill, and I really could not venture to do it," said Henry, turning round again. "Charles, the principal witness, declares that he died in ignorance of the fact; this much I learned from Mr. Grimston, the magistrate, who committed me, but...."

"Very unfortunate,—very; we must strive for evidence that, some way or other, he *did* know; tax your memory, it is scarcely likely

that you should not have given him a hint, to prepare him, left him at the mercy of accidental circumstances, as it were. But then, my goodness," jumping up and slapping his thigh, "what a dolt I was, not to see it,—what a triumphant exculpation for you. If you knew that he was not informed, you would never have inserted that in the preamble. It *must* be some one else; don't you see?—Quite right,—quite right,—you are ready to swear you say——"

Henry clasped his hands, but he shared not in the exultation of his friend.

"Ask me no more questions," at last he said, "I am not used to be cross-examined,—I shall get into contradictions."

"But you did *not* inform him; it was your belief that he was not informed by any one,—that he died in ignorance."

"It was my belief till this very day, that he did *not* die in ignorance, or the contradiction would have struck me upon reading the codicil; for though I certainly did not speak to him upon

the subject at that time, I, fearing it might be abruptly communicated in some other way, when he had rallied a little, which at that moment I had no reason to fear but he would,—wrote a letter in his room whilst he was dozing, in which I broke it to him, as warily as it was in my power, and I left orders that it should be given to him in the evening, if he was, as usual, better at that time. Of course, till this day I never doubted but that the letter had been delivered; but now I do; it appears certain that it never was."

"Say no more,—say no more," said Mr. Kingston, with a look of the deepest mortification; "that defence, that triumphant defence, is at an end. It now only remains to exculpate yourself, and turn out the real culprit,"

"Now, how long were you in the house that morning; and did any one come in or go out, during your stay? for there is a small circumstance which I have not yet mentioned, but which I have traced out, which limits the time during which this supposititious codicil could have been

placed where it was found. It seems that Charles was sent down by his master to fetch a paper out of the drawer in which the will was deposited. He had to turn over one or two, and, among others, will swear he saw the will lying there: hearing his bell ringing violently, he hurried up stairs, and found him very badly,—so badly that he was detained some time, and then was sent by you into the City, and quite forgot that he had left the drawer half open, and the keys hanging in the lock. And it was not till he came back in the afternoon, that he found the drawer locked, and the keys lying upon the table, which he took up to his master. Now the girl can swear that she saw you enter that room, for a moment or two, before you went up to Selwyn, and Charles can testify that there he found you; and nothing more is known of what you did with yourself after Charles went out; for it appears you let yourself out of the house, and no one knows or can tell when. Now some one else must have been in that house, and in that room, during that morning, and that

some one *must* be the culprit. Now, Harry, I say again, tax your memory. Did you see no one come in? Did you let no one in? Have you reason to suspect no one of having been there that morning? Tax your memory,—speak out, you look strangely, though you look away from me. Answer me frankly, at least yes or no. In the name of all that's vexatious," cried the old man, in a passion, at last, for he could really hold no longer; " in the name of all that's vexatious, you can at least answer me *that*."

"I would rather answer no more questions," was the reply, with a face darker than ever.

The conviction which had at last reached his own mind, seemed gathering fresh strength whilst Mr. Kingston was speaking: viewed in that light, not a doubt could remain. The faint hopes which still at moments flattered him of some other explanation, were dissipated. The mist which concealed the fearful truth cleared away, and the dreadful reality stood displayed in all its horror.

It was with difficulty that he could articulate the last few words.

But he did not yield to his emotion: he vanquished by a violent effort the inclination he felt to sink his face upon his arms on the table, and yield to his feelings of frightful distress. He denied himself even this relief; he endeavoured to look calm,—composed; but he felt as if nature must give way, and he must die.

Oh! if he could but there have died!

Again, again his friend looked at him in sorrow not unmixed with anger; but the anger soon faded into pity. "Then I can do nothing for you," he said sadly.

"I believe not," replied Henry.

The friend felt wounded by this reserve; the man of eminence in his profession, offended by this apparent want of confidence in his skill; the man of the world, the man accustomed to penetrate into the hidden mysteries of human nature, was perplexed and confounded.

"Why did you send for me then?" he said at last.

"Why, indeed?" was the reply.

"And what do you mean to do, then? What steps do you mean to take for your defence? Do you know what you are about? Do you know what would follow conviction? Good God! Mr. Henry, are you aware, or can you be ignorant, that the punishment for such a crime is *Death?*"

"I know it," was the answer.

"And how do you mean to conduct your defence?—how will you stand upon your defence? You cannot mean to plead guilty?"

"No, I shall plead Not guilty. It is usual, I believe. If they give credit to the assertion of my innocence,—well; if not,—why, well too!" he cried in a burst of agony. "My wife!—my sister!—my love! my Flavia!"

"Aye, sir," said Mr. Kingston gravely, "you should think of that sweet young lady. What your motives may be for this most unaccountable—pray excuse me—mode of conducting your

affairs, I know not; but we none of us stand alone in the world,—we none of us can sink into an abyss of misery without dragging others after us."

"Who should know that better than my wretched self?" he thought, but said not. He continued walking about the room in a paroxysm of despair; then, with a sort of desperate coolness, he sat down by Mr. Kingston, and said,—"Tell me, for I never exactly knew, what are the penalties attached to conviction of felony. Corruption of blood?—Confiscation of property? What is corruption of blood? It sounds something horrid."

"A man has neither ancestors nor successors; the law severs him as a corrupt member from his family; he henceforth has neither child nor father."

Henry looked quickly up—a flash, as it were, of strange meaning passed across his face.

"It is well," he said gloomily.

"No, it is not well; it is perfect unaccountable insanity," said Mr. Kingston hastily.

"Perhaps so: I seem to have lost the power to think."

"Indeed so it seems," said Mr. Kingston, beginning again to gather some hope from the strange manner Henry had assumed within the last half hour. He really began to believe, almost to hope, that he had lost his senses; he thought it would be better to leave him to recover himself; he began to think that the next morning he should find him more reasonable. There was not much time to be lost: the trial would come on in about three weeks; but one single night lost could not be of much importance.

So he deliberately took up and closed his silver inkstand, folded his paper, and placed them both in his pocket, still looking at Henry all the time. He now, under the various alternations of extreme misery, had sank into his chair again quite exhausted. The momentary irritation of his good old friend had been but the anger of a moment: he said now, as kindly and soothingly as ever:—

"I see, my dear sir, that this agitating day has

really been too much for you. I advise you to take a little rest; you seem quite ill. I will leave you now, and as I go out tell the turnkey to buy you some tea; it will be better for you than wine. Try to sleep; if you can't sleep, try to keep yourself still. I will come again to you to-morrow, if you will let me; and, cheer up—we shall find all come right, never fear. When you are a little more composed, we will settle our proceedings. Good night, Mr. Henry,—good night." . . . . . .

He went to the door, but returned.

"Have you anything to communicate to your father? Shall I call upon him? No doubt he knows all that has happened; but he will be anxious to hear what we have concluded upon. Where is he, at Roehampton?"

"I do not exactly know where he is," said Henry; "but, thank you, I would rather you made no attempt to see him just yet. Not—not—you know, till you can carry him something more,—something satisfactory. No, thank you, Kingston,

you are very kind,—too kind,—kinder than I, ... than we, ... but not till to-morrow; for you will come again to-morrow."

"Most certainly, unless you forbid it, and as early as possible."

And so they wrung hands and parted.

CHAPTER XIV.

It was about nine o'clock upon the evening of that day, that a chariot and four, containing two ladies within, drove up to the Adelphi, and stopped at the door of one of the principal hotels.

The external appointments, the lady's maid, and the smart footman upon the box, the whole appearance of the equipage, bespoke the look and importance of the new arrivals; and they were received with abundance of cordiality by the host

and hostess, not accustomed, of late years, to have much to do with the denizens of the fashionable world.

The two ladies descended from their carriage, the black veils that hung round their plain straw bonnets drawn down over their faces; and the taller and the one who appeared to be the elder, asking to be shown to a quiet apartment up-stairs which looked upon the river, they followed the mistress of the house in silence, into a large and lofty room, with a door at either end, which they were informed opened into two bed-rooms at their disposal.

The mistress of the hotel looked round to see if everything was in its place, then proceeded to open the doors which showed each a comfortable-looking bed-room, and asked whether this apartment would be to their satisfaction, adding that there were several others at her disposal if they would like to visit them and make their choice.

Neither lady cast more than a cursory glance

round, and then the elder one thanking the landlady, and saying it was just what they wanted, begged her to send up their maid.

And what refreshment would they be pleased to take?

"What will you have, my love?" said the taller lady going up to the slight youthful-looking creature, who had already seated herself upon a chair in an obscure corner, shaded by the window curtain.

She lifted up her head when thus addressed, and her lips through her black veil might be seen to move; but not a sound issued from them.

The other lady made no further attempt, but returning to the mistress of the house, again requested that the maid might be sent up immediately with her dressing-box and luggage into the bed-rooms, adding that she would send down word by her what they would have by-and-by.

And so with some little perseverance they got rid of the landlady, and then Caroline returned to

the window, and sitting down by the side of her companion, threw her arms round her, pressed her hand tenderly against her bosom, and stooping down, kissed her poor wan forehead in silence.

Flavia did not speak; but she lifted up those large, most beautiful eyes,—in gratitude and affection upon her friend;—even in this hour of suffering, beyond expression,—there was still left room in that heart for all the soft and grateful feelings. She was so good, that even this bitterest anguish could not embitter her. She could still feel all the sweetness of a grateful heart; and those tender, softening, gentle consolations which attend upon a loving, affectionate temper, when receiving the kindness and consolation of a friend.

How many are there, alas! who, in the selfishness, the irritation, or maybe the passion of excessive grief, reject, or are unable to taste such consolations. Such wait upon the generous, the patient, and the submissive,—upon those who have lived in the habits of affection—upon those

who have learned to receive affliction in faith and humility, and to accept the most unexpected and overwhelming misfortunes, with fortitude and resignation.

But she could not speak,—and this alarmed Caroline very much. During the whole of their frightful journey she had been perfectly sensible, calm, and composed, evidently alive to everything around her; for she kept pressing her friend's hand tenderly from time to time, and often strove, as it were, to speak; and her eyes were full of meaning, and her lips moved frequently,—but no sound issued from them.

Her patient fortitude, the childlike and gentle submission of her demeanour,—those sweet young features, bearing the character of the deepest anguish,—those eyes, once so bright and gay, now filled with a mournful, astonished, dreary sorrow, spoke volumes to poor Caroline's heart. But it was well for her that she had this sweet young creature to attend to — this still greater sufferer than herself to support. This genuine and

generous sympathy was the only thing at that moment which could have saved her almost from distraction.

She had consoled, soothed, comforted her poor Flavia during the journey, as well as she could;—but who or what could console her? She was in such a state of agonizing doubt, that she knew not what to say or do. To declare her belief in Henry would have been to insult him and all three of them. Of course not a shadow as to that ever crossed their minds; but this did little to relieve their distress.

To have been accused, arrested, carried off, imprisoned as a felon—that was enough for Flavia,—her imagination seemed to travel no farther. This had been sufficient: she thought not of a trial or its consequences, I believe;—she knew he was innocent, and imprisoned as a criminal;—and the shock—the surprise—the anguish, had done its work already with her.

But Caroline's present doubts, fears, and suspicions, were from time to time glancing across

her mind. She could not believe—she felt it impossible to believe, but that the whole was some dreadful unreality—some spectral dream—some mistake, from which they must all soon awaken; and yet, the circumstances of the codicil,—a something she never had quite liked, or understood about it—things would start as it were into her recollection; and then her heart would stand still for a few moments, and the hand which Flavia held in her's became icy cold.

Then Flavia would lift it up and kiss it, and gently rub it between her own, and look into Caroline's eyes, and softly stroke her wan cheek; but still without uttering a word.

Thus they had travelled to town;—and they reached it at last, as Caroline feared, too late to be admitted into the prison that night.

Flavia, however, soon raised her head from the shoulder of her kind friend; and looking at her again, tried to speak, then shook her head sorrowfully, as much as to say, it would not do; and taking up the little golden pencil which hung by

a chain round her neck, she wrote upon Caroline's fair white hand,

"Let us go to him."

"My dear, I fear it is too late."

She shook her head impatiently, and tried to say, "No, no; do, do——" but could not. Her gestures, however, spoke for her.

"Well, my love,—as you will. But take some sal volatile first, my dear. It is in my dressing-box. Try to recover yourself a little more, sweet girl, before you see him,—and then make up your mind to be disappointed; for I fear the gates will be shut for the night."

Again she showed by gestures her impatience to be gone.

Caroline rang and ordered a coach immediately; and then, hearing the maid busy in one of the bed-rooms, went to her dressing-box, and brought out some antispasmodic drops.

"Take these, my darling Flavia," said she. "You will try to speak to him—won't you?"

A sweet intelligent smile, and a cheerful promise was given by the eye.

"Then take these, and keep quite quiet till the carriage arrives."

She did as she was bid. Nay, more, she went to the sofa, threw herself down, and tried to compose herself to sleep. Caroline kissed her, and covered her with a shawl, and then she, too, threw herself into a corner of the same couch, and sat there mute and motionless.

"The coach is at the door, ladies," said a waiter, coming in.

Flavia started up, trembling terribly. Caroline rose, and put her arm under her's.

"Shall you want your servant to attend you?"

"No. Tell the man to drive to Fleet-street."

"What number, please, madam?"

"I will tell him when we get there."

Flavia trembled so dreadfully that she could hardly get into the coach. She seemed to be making desperate efforts with herself to keep still; but it was impossible. All that poor Caro-

line could hope was, that when she actually saw her husband these distressing symptoms would give way to tears, and that she would weep plentifully, for she had as yet not shed one tear since Henry's departure,—and that thus her voice would be restored, and this strange effect upon the nerves would cease.

But when they arrived at the gate of Newgate, the hour was, as she had anticipated, too late. They could not be admitted until ten o'clock the next morning.

At this announcement the poor young wife turned her face away to the side of the coach, and then she began to sob in a strange hysterical manner, as the carriage, by Caroline's direction, drove away upon its return home.

"Don't—don't, dearest Flavia,—my love, you break my heart," said poor Caroline, her courage at last quite overcome. "Pray don't—if you can help it—Flavia,—my own dear love—pray don't."

She evidently made every effort to check this

sad convulsion. She laid her hand upon Caroline's. She tried to smile. Then a violent fit of hysteric sobbing would come on;—then she would check herself, and take the hand again, and keep it,—sobbing and trembling all the while.

Ah! thou vindictive avenger, triumphing in the idea of revenge, of retribution—of bringing up to punishment the man who had wronged and injured you. Ah! man, who dared to be cruel and implacable to his erring fellow man!—not erring in that he brought a criminal to justice, but in that he did it gladly—with triumph, with exultation, with satisfaction—you never reflected upon anything of this kind,—you never thought of the innocent hearts that might be breaking,—you did not do this act of justice, as you deemed it, sorrowing, reluctant, hesitating, shuddering at the misery you must occasion. Oh! no, you are exhilarated by this victory,—you have become quite another being,—you are self-satisfied and content,—restored to your own self opinion,—

quite a personage again among men;—oh yes, you are dining cheerfully with two ill-dispositioned men,—the heartless and sarcastic unbeliever in goodness or in God, and the worshipper of Mammon, who, provided business goes on well, and the venison is roasted to a turn, cares little for all these things.

Oh yes, Mr. Craiglethorpe, there you are sitting, sipping your Madeira, and feeling yourself very particularly comfortable; and this sweet, good, innocent, excellent young creature,—this once gay, playful, happy child, is quivering and shaking, and breaking, as upon the wheel of her agony; and Caroline, the admirable Caroline, is enduring the anguish of her own wounds with the heroism of a Portia.

I say nothing of Henry. You thought him guilty,—and with you to be guilty is to be unworthy of all commiseration. But these innocents! the friends of the culprit! Why do you never think of them? you know he has a young wife and a sister. But what care you? You know

he has a father—but this is one cause of your exultation. The sword will reach him through his son's side.

It has reached him already.

What is become of that miserable man?

Henry had refused the offer made by Mr. Kingston of visiting his father, under the fear of his receiving the first announcement of what had happened before the eyes of a sagacious observer like that gentleman; he had determined that it was best to write, and regretted, as soon as Mr. Kingston was gone, that he had not asked him to put a letter into the post for him. He now, however, thought it best not to lose any time in making the communication, and a turnkey entering, desired him to find him a messenger to go to Wimbledon, saying he supposed there would be no objection to his writing a letter to his father; and inquired whether the regulations of the prison would require it to be sent unsealed.

"Oh," said the man, "five shillings will set all that matter right."

"I must ask you to get me pen, ink, and paper," putting a half sovereign into his hand.

The man looked mighty civil upon this; and immediately going forth to execute his commands, soon returned with the necessary things.

Henry wrote to his father.

HENRY TO MR. WILMINGTON.

MY DEAR FATHER,

Prepare yourself for something that will distress you excessively. Summon up all your fortitude and resolution to meet a most unexpected and terrible blow. Last night I was arrested at my own house, and upon a charge the most unexpected to me, namely, forgery of poor Selwyn's will. I need say no more; this intelligence will, I know, shock you greatly, and overwhelm you, I fear, with grief. But bear up, my dear father, I am supported in this trying situation in a manner I could scarcely have hoped from myself; but so it is: and yet it is necessary that you should prepare yourself for the worst. Circum-

stances that I cannot explain have rendered it impossible for me to stand upon my defence in the way my legal advisers would suggest, and I cannot disguise from myself, what the result must in all probability be; therefore, my dear father, I write to beg of you to maintain as much composure as possible, under a blow which I know you will feel so keenly; depend upon it, I will make every effort to save myself, consistent with my sense of what circumstances call upon me to do. I will not ask you to come and see me at present, the meeting might upset us both; comfort yourself, support yourself, my dearest father,—my heart bleeds for you. I know what you would suffer, and would to God I could spare you this, as I would gladly all other suffering.

HENRY WILMINGTON.

On the superscription was put, "to be delivered to Mr. Wilmington when quite alone."

CHAPTER XV.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilmington were sitting together the evening of that eventful day; it had just struck eleven o'clock—they had long finished tea, and were placed by the window, which looked out upon her garden. The moon was up, and shone upon the trees, and shrubs, and vases, and flower-baskets of that beautiful garden; but they neither of them heeded either the soft moonlight, the tender shadows, or the extreme loveliness of the

scene before them—there was no one to admire, no vanity to be gratified; and the pure sense of beauty, the intense enjoyment of such scenes for their own sake alone, was not for them.

They sat there with a beautifully inlaid but small table between them, lighted by an elaborate silver-gilt lamp that stood near, and were playing at écarté, when a servant came in and said Mr. Wilmington was wanted.

"Who wants him at this time of night?" said Lizzy, pettishly.

"I wish Raimond, you would not let people disturb us after dinner. Tell the person, whoever he be, to go away, and come again at a proper hour to-morrow morning."

"If you please, sir," repeated the butler, coming up to his master, and speaking in a low agitated voice, "would you be so good as to step this way for a moment?"

The man's voice and look struck Mr. Wilmington and his wife at the same moment.

"Bless us, what's the matter?" exclaimed

Lizzy; "I am sure I am grown quite nervous of late—everything terrifies me. I wish to goodness you wouldn't ———"

But Mr. Wilmington, who had risen hastily, had with Raimond already left the room.

"A messenger with a letter—from Mr. Harry,—from your son, sir,—and desires it may be delivered to you when you are alone."

"My son! What the deuce can be the matter now? A messenger?—Nothing amiss with Mr. Harry, I hope. Candles in my room. Give me the letter."

And he walked into his own room, and sitting down by the table, upon which the candles were placed, took the letter from the servant's hands, who immediately left the room.

"What, in the name of goodness, can keep you

so long?" exclaimed Mrs. Wilmington, in her most acrid tone, vexed to have been kept so long waiting, and she dying with curiosity all the time to know what had happened.

"What, in the name of goodness?..... Why, Mr. Wilmington, where are you?"

The window stood wide open, and the candles were flaring in their sockets, but there was no Mr. Wilmington.

Lizzy looked about;—everything was as usual, except that the chair upon which he had evidently been sitting, was thrown down. She stepped to the window, which opened to the ground. The branch of a fuschia, which happened to have fallen across the path, was broken and trampled upon, as if some one had hastily rushed out that way.

She was rather a coward, and did not like to go even into her own garden alone at night,—and there was something—she did not know what—that made her feel particularly nervous just then, so she only stood upon the threshold of the win-

dow, and looked out into the night to see if she could discover Mr. Wilmington; but nothing was to be seen, though the moonlight was so bright that it was almost as light as day. She listened but she heard nothing; so with a slight shiver she came in again and shut-to the glass-door, and then returned to the drawing-room, thinking it probable her husband had come there some other way.

But he was not returned. She waited, fretting and uncomfortable, for some little time longer,—then she rang the bell, and asked Raimond whether he knew what was become of his master.

He knew nothing. Raimond had carried candles for him into his sitting-room; and he had gone there to read the letter.

"What letter?"

"Why the letter, ma'am, the messenger brought. I thought you knew,—by this time, surely, ma'am."

"No, I know nothing, you tedious, tiresome

old man. Tell me all about it. What did you call Mr. Wilmington out for, to give him a letter? You *must* be so full of your silly secrets, Raimond; but I'd have you to know your master has no secrets for me."

"It was put upon the letter, Mrs. Wilmington, that it was to be read alone; and I'm afraid there was bad news of some sort in it, for the man said he brought it from Newgate prison;—and, as sure as I'm here, I think it was in Mr. Henry's hand;—but *he* can't be in Newgate prison—*that* one *is* sure of."

"What can it all be about,—good gracious! I do wonder where your master is," cried Lizzy, starting up, more stimulated by curiosity than anxiety;—curiosity was the master-passion, if passion it may be called, of her mind. "I dare say he's up-stairs in his dressing-room."

"Shall I go and see?"

"No, I'll go myself," taking a candle.

But the dressing-room was empty; it was all arranged with its usual display, every trifle of

show or necessity laid out, exactly in its place; no one seemed to have been there. They searched the house, and then they searched the garden. No trace, except that some part of a hedge which separated the grounds from Wimbledon Park seemed to have been newly broken through.

Raimond discovered, too, that his master's hat and gloves, which were usually placed in his sitting-room, were missing. They waited hour after hour, and still he did not return.

The first emotion of Mr. Wilmington, upon reading his son's generous letter, had been consistent with his character,—it had been a paroxysm of selfish terror.

The danger of his unparalleled boy,—the sense of his heroic piety and generosity,—the remorse for his own wickedness and crime,—were all lost, swallowed up, in the fear, the agonizing

sense of alarm, which possessed him,—turning white as a sheet, his eyes staring, his hands clenched, twice he paced the room, perfectly bewildered with terror.

Fully aware of the fate to which he had exposed himself,—a fate which had haunted him day and night since the deed was done,—now the hideous gallows rose up, as it were, immediately before him, and an almost maddening impulse to secure his own safety, at any cost, possessed him.

He resolved to fly. No time was to be lost. He snatched up his hat, and rushed out of the window, and did not stop till he reached the banks of the Thames.

Arrived there, he looked out for some waterman whom he might hail; but no one was to be seen: it was past midnight, and every one from the landing-place had gone home and to rest. He stood and looked upon the calm expanse of water before him, reflecting the silver light of the moon, which tinted the tops of some of the trees, and threw others into black spectral shadows

which seemed to the terror of his guilty heart, to look like yawning graves. He looked round—he listened—all was perfectly still.

Strange fears—fears of he knew not what, an indescribable ecstacy of terror, then came over him. He paused a little, and then, impelled once more by the desire at any risk to fly,—hurried forward, though still without success; not a boat could he see.

At length, exhausted by his rapid walk, and still more by the agony of his own thoughts, he found himself compelled to sit down and to take breath. And then, as often happens where the nerves have been extraordinarily excited, a sudden revulsion took place.

He felt himself extremely ill, and a kind of night-mare sensation came over him, as if he never should be able to accomplish his escape. He did not happen to know what boats were under orders for sailing the next morning, at what hour they started, or whither bound. He fancied himself waiting impatiently upon the platform,

betrayed to the suspicion of every one who looked upon him,—for his evil conscience painted himself as carrying his crime written upon his forehead. Then, suddenly it struck him that he was without money. A few sovereigns were all he had at that moment in his purse. How could he escape? How could he conceal himself without money? He had about £100 in notes lying, he knew, in his scrutoire. Oh, that he had but recollected that in the paroxysm of his fear!

He must return and fetch the notes, that was absolutely necessary; and as he thought of this, and as his nervous tremor began to subside, and he was able to view his situation with some slight degree of calmness, he bethought himself of the strange appearance his flight must carry in the eyes of everybody. His son in such a situation,—he just informed of it,—it was sufficient to direct suspicion upon himself. Could any conduct be more mad? Then he trembled and shivered as he recollected that even flight did not positively ensure the safety of a criminal; he had heard of

one government giving up great criminals to others.

There seemed no place on earth where he could shroud himself from the searching eyes of his fellow men but America. Lost in those endless wilds, even to his terrified imagination, it seemed as if justice would pursue him in vain; but then, how to get to America? He must have money.

Return he must; and if he returned, had he better persist in his endeavour to escape, or should he dare to remain where he was?

He took out his son's letter, and by the bright moonlight read it again.

He had hurried through it so hastily before, that indeed he might scarcely have been said to have read it at all. The first announcement that Selwyn's will had been discovered to be a forgery had driven all other considerations out of his head; he knew the truth; he knew too well the criminal, and crushing the letter into his pocket, in terror approaching to delirium, he had, as we have seen, started up and rushed headlong out of the

window; but now, when he had read it through, a completely new order of ideas were awakened by it.

He began to see the whole in a different light—he began to surmise the generous purpose of his son; he was struck by his earnest entreaties to him to preserve his composure, by the precautions he evidently was taking that by no sudden and unexpected shock he should be overcome and exposed. He now saw clearly, that his son was aware—as his conscience told how it was impossible but he should be aware—if the crime had been committed, who had committed it. His safest way was to return home; his son would have advised it; his son was aware of all the circumstances of the case; he had better return immediately; his absence might not even have been observed.

Still I do not think all these reasonings would have given him courage enough to take this step, if it had not been for the absolute necessity of providing himself with money, and for the reso-

lution he secretly formed to take care to do this to an extent which would enable him to accomplish his flight at any moment he might choose.

He read his son's letter a third time, and then the base selfishness of actual fear a little diminished; he read it, and anguish of another nature at last reached that contemptible heart.

The danger he was escaping himself; but how would it be with his son? I must own, in defence of his heartless insensibility to Harry's position, that at the moment he really was not conscious of it: his whole mind was filled with the terrors which too surely awaited the real criminal. The dangers that surrounded the innocent, in the agonies of apprehension for himself, really escaped him; but now, as he sat there, calmed, insensibly to himself, by the still influence of the hour, the liquid moonlight bathing the sleeping landscape—as he read that letter the third time, the words, "It is necessary that you should prepare yourself for the worst," took their true meaning; he had thought but of himself, applied them to himself.

In his hurry of thought he had not given attention to the following lines:—"Circumstances which I cannot explain have rendered it impossible for me to stand upon my defence, and I cannot disguise from myself what the result must in all probability be." Now their full meaning flashed upon his mind, and the paper fell from his hands.

The unhappy father—the wretched man at length felt like the father—like the man: a horror, an agony indescribable, took possession of him. He fell back upon the grass, his hat fell off; he clenched his hands in his hair, he rolled upon the earth in his agony, and groaned aloud.

Then he sat up, and cast a wild despairing glance at the sky,—at the calm, impenetrable mystery of the heavenly depths, which spoke no hope or peace to him, but seemed, in their holy calmness, to reject him as the miserable outcast he felt himself to be. Then he gazed upon the cold tranquil waters; they too seemed to mock his burning brain.

To plunge in those depths, and bury himself

and his miserable history at once, might have suggested itself to many a man so overwrought as he was; but that was quite out of character with him —he was preserved from *that* temptation at least.

Stunned, confused, scarcely knowing what he did, at last he rose up; looked for his hat, put it mechanically upon his head, and then, with tottering steps, and as if led by some external impulse, —some instinct like that of an animal, quite independent of his will,—he turned his steps homewards.

It was two o'clock before the wretched man arrived there, but he found the house still up,—even the window by which he had gone out still open, and by that he entered; and, going up stairs into his own dressing-room, had just sense and self-command enough to ring his bell, and, without opening his door, to tell Raimond that he was come in, and everybody might go to bed.

And then he locked and double-locked his door, and passed a night amid the tortures of hell.

Remorse was come at last.

The avenging Fury, with the whips of scorpions, had awakened at last; and the very weakness of the mind she visited gave fresh power to the cruel stings.

His boy—his son—his Harry!

Where was he?—In a dark loathsome dungeon—so imagination painted it—blasted as a felon; death staring him in the face,—the hideous death of a public execution!

And he it was who had brought him to this!

His own—his only son!

Not led him to wrong, as the cause, the instigator, the tempter, as many wicked parents might have done; but he, the innocent, the honourable, the pure, was standing actually in his own guilty place!

He was going to be condemned, and to die for him!

This angel of light—this admirable—this excellent—this incomparable young man,—for him!

A poor, contemptible, erring, weak, worthless criminal!

For thus the avenging conscience painted the vain flatterer to himself, now.

Oh, misery!—misery!—misery!

Never-dying worm—endless, excruciating misery—torturing thoughts—sleepless, never-changing, agonising, racking thoughts:—such would his future be!

His son!—no, he should not—he must not—he cannot—he shall not die!

Ah, weak wretch!—never strengthened by one manly sacrifice—by one generous deed of self-immolation—by one sentiment of pure and noble self-devotion to the high, the generous, and the good,—where shall you find courage now; where shall you find strength, in this your hour of need?

Better die ten thousand deaths, than endure the agonizing consciousness which now, which will henceforward and for ever, torture you,—that you have let the innocent die in your place, and that innocent one your own son; better a thousand times, even as a matter of mere vile, selfish calculation!

But can you do it? Have you stamina—manliness—strength—virtue?

Oh, no! no!

Such things do not come to us just when we want them—they are not ready at our beck and call. The precious virtues, they are not to be had just because we wish to exercise them on an occasion frightful such as this. He who has despised or neglected all self-exercise in his day, shall find his *self* betray him in the terrible hour; his *self* shall not answer to the call; the vain idol he has made that self shall prove a tyrant too potent for his will.

The weak, enervated, miserable slave to self, sank in the unequal struggle. Wretched, remorseful, torn with tortures indescribable he *could* be,—and you may pity him; but just, courageous, bravely righteous in the face of personal danger, he could not be.

No, not to save his only son.

And for this miserable being Harry Wilmington was now preparing himself seriously to die.

For was it not his father!

Filial piety, like all the other gentle domestic virtues, was strong in his heart—it had blinded him to many of his father's faults; he had been ready to accept the faint seeming of what was good for a reality, so long as it had been possible. But as life advanced, he could no longer continue thus altogether blinded; his esteem for his father might be said to have been long almost at an end—still he endeavoured to cherish in himself, those pure feelings of reverence which seem instinctive to the good. The forms of outward respect were never violated; he never forgot he was his father.

And now one must die,—that father or himself—one be betrayed, that father's crime, or himself lost. He could not contemplate the alternative,—to shelter himself by exposing his father's guilt, was impossible. He would make the best defence he could, subject to this condition; but he believed

that it would be utterly inadequate—he must be condemned, and he must die.

He cast up his eyes to that Judge who knows the secrets of the heart, and offered Him the homage and submission of a spirit pure from this crime. He murmured not at the inexplicable decree by which he, the innocent, must suffer the penalties of the law;—one thought alone it was that blanched his faded cheek and dimned his eye —one *was* guilty, and it was his father.

The next morning was sweet even to him—sweet to them all.

Weeping in his arms, he clasped his little, loving, devoted wife, and tears streamed from his eyes over her innocent head. He looked into his sister's calm, majestic eyes, and felt that all was right there, too—and was comforted. In their strong affection, in their unquestioning confidence

in his integrity, he felt as if he heard the sentence which one day or other would be finally pronounced upon him. The rest was an affair of time.

Flavia and Caroline were at the gates of Newgate before ten o'clock; and they sat there waiting in their hackney-coach some time. Ever since they had arrived even so far, and were certain of of being admitted, they had both seemed and felt better.

The gates at length opened; the coach rolled in —and they were within the drear precincts of a prison,—that awful and mysterious abode of guilt and suffering, which had seemed to them till now rather as a fabled tale than as an actual reality. But here they really were; and the one nearest and dearest of all earthly things was a prisoner within these walls.

They got out of the coach they knew not how, and, arm clasped in arm, followed the turnkey, who, with his huge bunch of keys dangling from his hand, went forward before them, in a careless,

indifferent way—lounging from side to side, and swinging the jangling keys heedlessly as he went. The key is applied to the lock—a grating sound, and the heavy, nailed door opens to admit them.

Henry was sitting, his head leaning upon his hand, his elbow resting upon the table, in deep thought; his face was deadly pale—it is the native hue of the prison-house—and his form seemed, even thus early, bowed and bent down with suffering. He had lost the erect bearing of the free and undaunted man; how should one accused, imprisoned, and about to be convicted of a deadly crime, maintain it? But the sleep of innocence had visited his pillow that night, and he felt calmed and composed; and there was a sweet serenity upon that serious face, and a something —a brightness—a sort of forecast of the heaven to which he belonged.

Both young women paused simultaneously upon the threshold; for he had not even lifted his head. When the door opened, they had gazed

upon him one moment with reverence—then the tongue of the young wife was loosened as by a charm, and calling out, "Henry!" she fell upon his bosom. There is something in hearty, honest tears—there is something in the strong embrace of sorrow—a something to which all that prosperity can bestow, is faint—and so they both felt as they strained themselves convulsively to each other, and mingled their tears.

Caroline stood by, the tears moistening her large dark eyes, and felt they were comforted. As for her, she was supported by her deep, enthusiastic sense of her brother's goodness. The sense of the sublime is an elevating, an inspiring feeling;—his heroism seemed to inspire and elevate her above ordinary sorrow.

I do not know exactly why it was, or how it was, that without the smallest communication upon the subject with her brother, unless the slight exchange of looks after their eyes fell together upon the paper he had destroyed two days ago, might be called such—she seemed to have

divined exactly the position in which he was standing.

The tears Flavia shed relieved her from all those dreadful nervous sensations against which she had so vainly struggled; and it was a beautiful thing to see how, immediately upon being set at liberty from those distressing fetters of the will, her mind and her heart responded to the call.

The first, the only thought in her mind, was for her husband;—she never cast one even, upon her own heavy sorrow. How to assist, support, and comfort him, was her only thought; and how to show her gratitude for Caroline's kindness. So after she had wept her fill, she gently disengaged herself from his arms, kissed him; went up to Caroline, kissed her tenderly, and whispering, "You shall have no more trouble with me now, Caroline," drew a chair close by her husband, locked her arm in his, and began to talk of what they could do to make him more comfortable.

"Your presence, my sweetest love, is enough

for that," he said, bending down again, and kissing her fair hair; "if you can but preserve this sweet serenity,—can but be composed and resigned, my own darling, all the rest will be easy to endure. This is a great trial for you both, my dear girls—a hard trial for us all; but the only way to soften these cruel hours, is to resign ourselves and everything at once into the hands of God—to submit calmly to His holy will, and bless Him for the alleviation He has given to the evil that has befallen us in our prosperity, and in being allowed to be together."

"Caroline, sister," holding out his hand to her, whilst his other was clasped round Flavia's waist, whose head rested upon his shoulder; "our firm and constant and best friend,—I never knew the full value of such a treasure before,—though I have not been ungrateful for it;" and he looked at the calm, serious face of his sister, met her eye, and glanced at his sweet wife, as much as to say, "I shall leave her to you."

They sat together several hours, till Henry became uneasy at not having heard from his father, and impatient for Mr. Kingston's arrival, from them he expected to gain intelligence.

About two o'clock that gentleman arrived. He came in as they were all three still sitting together.

A slight exclamation, "Oh!" and hesitation about entering.

"Come in, my good friend," said Henry, rising cheerfully; "we are not very well supplied with chairs here, but there is a seat for you. My wife, my sister,—Mr. Kingston, and my own and my father's very old and valued friend."

The old man looked first at one young lady, then at the other;—they held out their hands; he took each in silence, then sat down, and endeavoured to clear his throat; his hands shook—he was much agitated.

"You may venture to talk about business, Mr. Kingston, before these young ladies. We are

happier together than separate;—there is a little wife, and here is a dear sister—each of them able and willing to assist me in my defence, were it necessary. I shall behave better than I did yesterday."

"I don't doubt it, I dare say," was all Mr. Kingston could articulate.

"But we have been anxiously expecting you," said Henry. "You promised yesterday you would visit my father. I wrote to him last night. Have you seen him?"

"Yes," said Mr. Kingston; "I have seen him. Don't let me distress you, my dear young friends; the shock has been too much for him;—he is very ill."

Caroline and Henry glanced at one another; and Caroline said, "Tell us all, Mr. Kingston, if you please. How did you find him?—let us hear the worst."

"You cannot be surprised. Your father has his faults, but he loves his children."

Caroline looked down, Henry looked up—something comforting was at his poor heart.

Mr. Kingston went on.

"I found him in bed; for indeed he is quite unable to rise; he has had a sort of fit—something of that sort, I believe; but, pray, don't be frightened. He has been bled, and is pronounced, I believe, almost out of danger."

Strange expressions had fluttered over Caroline's face during this speech. At its conclusion she sighed, and then started and checked herself with a sort of shuddering at her own sigh.

"Pray go on," said Henry.

"The anguish of his mind," continued Mr. Kingston, now seating himself, "at the receipt of Mr. Henry's letter, drove him at first, I believe, almost distracted. It appears that he rushed out of the house into the fields, and could not be found, though they searched everywhere. In about two hours, however, he must have returned

of his own accord, for his dressing-room bell was heard to ring; but when his man went up, the door was locked, and he did not open it. He told the servant to request Mrs. Wilmington to go to bed, and ordered him to shut up the house, and send every one to rest. He did not go to bed himself that night. Early in the morning his bell was heard ringing again; and when Raimond came to him, he complained of feeling very strangely, and looked more like one dead than alive, the man said. He ran to fetch his mistress, and a doctor was sent for. He was perfectly sensible then, it seemed, but appeared very weak; but the doctor said he must be immediately bled, nevertheless. They had great difficulty in persuading him to submit to this, and still more in persuading him to go to bed; but at last they succeeded, and there I found him.

"Excuse me, Mr. Henry Wilmington; I thought I knew your father. I had done him injustice, I

own: I had not imagined that he possessed so much sensibility. No father—not the tenderest, I am convinced—could have suffered more upon this occasion than he has done, and still does. The doctor says it will kill him; but I think not. Console yourself, Miss Wilmington,—I think not. I have seen him. It is my firm persuasion that he will live."

She had risen from her chair whilst he was talking. It seemed as if she could not sit still. Her agitation was excessive. She strove to master it,—she could not. Now a gleam of hope, yet with a strange mixture of horror in it, was seen in her eyes, followed by shuddering and trembling, and wringing of the hands. Caroline had never been seen in such a state before.

Henry, on the contrary, preserved his composure: he seemed deeply interested in what Mr. Kingston was saying, but not in the least degree agitated like his sister.

After one or two turns up and down the room, her hands still clasped and wrung before her, with a face black with repressed emotion, she at last came up and said to Mr. Kingston,

"Did you see my father yourself? and what . . . . did anything—anything—pass?"

For the first time Henry looked up at her, and there was reproach in his glance.

Mr. Kingston seemed a little surprised, and said,

"No; nothing particular passed. He seemed, indeed, so very ill, that he could not have listened to, even if he had been capable of bearing, the only subject at that time we could either of us have entered upon. I began by telling him I came from his son; to which he made no answer, but by shutting his eyes, drawing the cover over his face, and I thought I heard him sobbing. I hastened to tell him that you were well and composed, and that I hoped—but as I said the

word, he started up, threw off the covering from his face, and looked at me in such an ecstasy of joy——"

Mr. Kingston's voice trembled a little; he stopped a moment, and then he said, looking seriously at Henry; "but I thought it my duty to add, that unless you adopted the line of defence I advocated, and against which you seemed to have taken up what was to me the most inexplicable prejudice, I could not answer for the consequences; adding, that I trusted he would use all his influence to advise you to it. And upon this he uttered a low groan, and sunk down in his bed again.

"Indeed, Mr. Henry, what I took the liberty of urging last night would have double force with you, if you could see the state your father is in."

Henry made no reply: he pressed his wife more closely and tenderly. She cast up her eyes to his at this appeal with the expression of a holy angel,

as he thought; but she only shivered a little, and uttered not a word. Caroline came and placed herself at the back of Henry's chair.

Then he said, "I assure you, Mr. Kingston, I see the duty as plainly as you do of defending myself by every means in my power; and I own it seems to me as if the defence I have to offer ought to be sufficient to satisfy any body of men. My character—my simple denial of any knowledge whatsoever of that paper—and the fact of my *not* having communicated the intelligence of his uncle's death to my poor friend. Further than this it would be useless for me to attempt to go; for I have no one to corroborate me. As to declaring the time I passed in Selwyn's house, or how I disposed of myself whilst there——"

"And did no one else but yourself enter the house that morning, that you know of? That is the inconceivable part of the business to me. Some one must have been there during your stay,

because the circumstance of the blank fixes the time to that very portion of the day unequivocally. Have you here none of the servants? Somebody must have been in that room—must have been there long enough to have prepared that paper. One of the servants is, I understand, subpœnaed as evidence for the prosecution; but the other, for there was another, where is she? what is become of her?"

Harry was silent, the remark seemed to strike him.

"Where is she?"

"I do not know."

"But she must be searched out; her evidence must be closely sifted. Where was she all that morning? Why is she not produceable? What is become of her? I will instantly set on foot an inquiry—I will sift this matter out. When was she last heard of? Oh yes—I see, her fellow-servant will certainly know something about her;

where she went, at least, when they were discharged."

Caroline began to change colour rapidly; Flavia to tremble with impatience, as Mr. Kingston was speaking; but Henry interrupted him.

"No," said he; "I would rather you would not search out that woman."

Caroline clasped her hands,—Flavia turned suddenly round, and hid her face against her husband's shoulder. Again he gently pressed her in his arms, and bending down kissed her hair once more, and whispered—

"My angel! my patient, my noble, generous angel; support and solace of your poor husband's heart."

But Mr. Kingston looked again very serious; nay, displeased.

"It is not merely that this woman's evidence might turn the scale in your favour, but that if we neglect to search her out it may make against us."

"I don't see that," said Henry, calmly; "why does not the prosecution bring her forward? They lay themselves open to the same imputation."

"I fear not—they have already brought forward one servant."

CHAPTER XVI.

How they all supported themselves during the ensuing three weeks, it is hard to tell; how they could support themselves in this almost unheard-of situation; would be almost inexplicable to those who have not experienced that faith which can move mountains,—that strength which is derived from the moral powers rightly directed, and supported by an intimate, vivid conviction of the existence and the never-sleeping providence of Him who made this mysterious scheme of

things—and who remembers mercy in judgment. As the days passed by, far from losing, these three excellent beings seemed to derive fresh courage from their mutual affection; from a faith not the mere offspring of the present calamity, but the result of right and serious exercises of the heart and mind in the day when the sky was serene and the sunshine bright. Such faith abides the fiery trial;—it is not the hasty flame of straw and stubble, it strengthens, it gathers round the heart, a shield which quenches the fiery darts of evil.

Their minds—firm through resignation, composed by submission, animated by hopes which the world can neither give nor take away; they not only found consolation, they were able even to enjoy the sweets of their mutual affection; yes, even to find a sweetness in it, as I said before, which during all the hours of their happiness had they not known.

Mr. Wilmington continued miserably ill; his

sufferings were dreadful,—they were of course all attributed to his excessive love for his son, for which his friends never before had given him credit,—they acknowledged this, and pitied him the more.

As for Mr. Craiglethorpe, he continued implacable. He pressed forward the prosecution with more zeal and exultation, in consequence of Henry's letter, which he regarded as almost an acknowledgment of guilt, whilst he felt offended by what he thought an attempt to impose upon him. The actual sufferings of the victims of his revengeful feelings troubled him not, for they were not brought before his eye. Men would not be so hard-hearted as they are, if they would but take the trouble to inquire what others endure. It would have been impossible for Mr. Craiglethorpe to have maintained these barbarous feelings of exultation and triumph over the father, if he had known what he was trampling thus under his feet.

As it was, he went on during this three weeks, visiting his old friends, renewing old acquaintances, dining out, eating good things, and drinking good wines, calling from time to time upon the solicitor for the prosecution, to learn how things were going on; rejoicing in the certainty of success, and never suffering himself to suspect for one single moment, that the man he was pursuing so unmercifully might be innocent.

There was one excuse certainly for this: every circumstance strengthened the conviction that the will was unquestionably forged.

This one, in agonies of horror too great for description, in alternations of terror that made his blood chill and his face go blue, as if in cholera,—all the wretchedness of the miserable coward who knows what he ought to do, and dare not for his life do it.

Another, in hardening his heart in pride, revenge, and hatred.

The rest, in the experience of all that love and

goodness, and pious resignation can do to extract the sting from death. So passed the time. The day at last arrived when the trial was to take place.

Henry had prepared himself early; and, dressed in a plain suit of black, with his white waistcoat and his white neckcloth, looked prepared for some important scene of life. His hair had been carefully arranged by his wife and sister, and had resumed its glossy wave, and his hat and gloves placed by his side upon the table, he waited the summons to the bar of the Old Bailey.

He looked grave, but perfectly composed, and so did his wife and sister. There was no call upon his strength and fortitude there. Each one understood perfectly the situation in which they

were; each one had tacitly submitted to it. The horror of accusing their own father,—of bringing a parent to punishment and death,—had been equally felt by all three. I believe it will be by all who read this story.

The thing is strange,—some may think it unnatural,—*I* do not; but these two women both agreed in the desire to be present at the trial. To me it seems natural that, resigned as they were to the worst, utterly without hope of everything but a condemnation, under a chain of circumstantial evidence apparently so unbroken, that they should desire to accompany to the last, through every scene of this disastrous affair, the man whom they loved to such intensity. They certainly did desire it, and through the care of Mr. Kingston, were provided with places in the court, as private as he could contrive for them, and commanding a view of the bar, at which their husband and brother was shortly to appear,—Mr. Kingston accompanying him there. They had

both dressed themselves in black, and long and thick black veils hung over their faces, and they had taken the greatest care to conceal their intention from Henry, fearing that their presence might disturb and overset him.

So there they were placed, before the crowding and bustling, incident to a filling court, began.

It was the first trial at which they had either of them ever been present.

They watched the judge in his scarlet robes taking his seat upon the bench;—it was, I believe, Dampierre. Never man arrayed as criminal judge presented a more venerable aspect; his long but beautiful features, his fine eye, his pale skin,—not pale with the paleness of sickness but of feeling; his whole aspect so dignified, yet so calm, so composed, so just, so kind, struck me when I once saw him presiding, as the finest example of what a judge should *appear*, at least, that could be imagined.

There was a comfort to the accused even to look

upon that countenance; he must have felt he should have justice done him, and tempered with mercy.

Then the lawyers began to gather round the table, all looking more than usually interested, and with something less than usual of their disposition to make mirth of everything; for young Wilmington was known personally to some in a slight degree, and by reputation to most; he was a young man like themselves,—it was a dreadful streight to stand in.

By-and-bye, Messrs. Jones and Estcourt might be seen coming in and taking their seats, as nearly opposite the bar as they could; and last crept in an old, thin, withered man, dressed in a suit of brown, with brown eye, sharp as that of the falcon, and a countenance sagacious, severe, determined, which no one could overlook, and took his place behind the two before-mentioned gentlemen, and fixed his eyes with a look of earnest expectation upon the bar.

The usual ceremonies were gone through, and the prisoner was ordered to appear.

Steps were heard ascending the stairs which led from the place where the prisoners were kept till summoned to trial, and Harry Wilmington appeared. He had never, as you well know, been gifted with any particular advantages of appearance, and was far from having any personal beauty to boast of, but as I sat in the court that day,—interested, deeply interested, in the event as I was, —I could not help remarking the wonderful, the almost all-powerful effect of mind over matter in the human countenance. He looked fair and pale, and the delicacy of his complexion was set off by the shades of his dark brown hair, which fell in rich masses round his face; his eye was serious and melancholy, darkened, as it were, by the cloud of sorrow, yet composed, steady, calm; there was a sweetness indescribable in the expression of the whole face, but the softness of patience was elevated by an air of firm and unaffected dignity.

The consciousness of innocence was never written in more unquestionable characters upon any countenance. His black dress, his white waistcoat and neckcloth, gave an elegance—a full dress character, if I may say so—to his appearance, which suited well with the solemnity of the occasion.

I watched Mr. Craiglethorpe, for I already knew the outline of the story. I saw him put his head eagerly forward, as the accused was heard ascending the steps behind the bar, fix his eyes upon him intently, as soon as he appeared, and then he began, as I thought, to grow a little pale, and paler, and paler, the longer and the more intently he looked, and then his hand, which rested upon a gold-headed cane he had with him, slightly, very slightly, began to tremble. The sarcastic, malignant expression, which had made his presence absolutely hateful to me, began to be exchanged for a look of amazement,—almost doubt, hesitation. He looked at the prisoner, —he looked down,—paler and paler he grew,

but, except the slight trembling of the hand however, his emotions, whatever they might be, were only evidenced upon his countenance, and nobody seemed to observe him but myself; he sat a good deal obscured by his two friends, and the attention of every one was rivetted upon the prisoner.

The arraignment began, bearing that he who stands indicted by the name of Henry Wilmington, of Lostwithiel, in the county of Montgomeryshire, Esquire, did, on or after the 26th of August, 18——, in the —— year of his Majesty's reign, with force and arms, in the parish of St. James's, London, feloniously and falsely, make, forge, and counterfeit, and cause and procure to be falsely made, forged, and counterfeited, and willingly act and assist in the false making, forging, and counterfeiting, a certain will and testament, purporting to be the last will and testament of Charles Selwyn, the tenor of which will and testament is as follows: that is to say———.

And here the short paper, purporting to be the last will of poor Selwyn was put in and read. It consisted of a few lines, all written, as it would appear, in the testator's own hand, and was signed by him. The countenance of the prisoner changed, and his eye was observed to drop as this paper was produced and read; then he leaned his elbow upon the bar and covered his face with his hand, and so continued till the reading was over.

The voice of the clerk of arraigns was heard.

"How sayest thou, Henry Wilmington;—art thou guilty of the felony whereof thou standest indicted, or not guilty?"

And then distinct, clear, unhesitating, the accent of truth itself, the reply was made,—

"Not guilty."

"Prisoner, how wilt thou be tried?"

The same clear, distinct, firm voice sounded through the court, listening in breathless silence.

"By God and by my country."

And then the counsel for the prosecution rose and opened the case. I shall not follow that gentleman in his oratory, but briefly relate to you the order and manner in which the facts were brought forward.

He stated, that the late Mr. Selwyn had made a will, about half a year before the day of his death, in which he had left the bulk of his property to his uncle, Miles Craiglethorpe, Esq., with the exception of legacies to his servants and friends, the only considerable one being one of ten thousand pounds, as a proof of his friendship to Henry Wilmington, Esq., son of Mr. Wilmington, of Belgrave-square, and of the Beeches, Wimbledon; "this will," he added, "is not now in existence; it has been destroyed, but its provisions can be sworn to by my friend, Mr. Mason, the confidential solicitor of the deceased, who had been employed by him to draw up every paper of importance, without exception, that it had ever been necessary to execute, and

had at various times been consulted upon, and made alterations in this will, there appearing not one single instance in which that gentleman had ever attempted to draw up any testamentary paper whatever, without his assistance."

Mr. Craiglethorpe, I could fancy, had, even before the lawyer had proceeded thus far, become more composed again,—he ceased to look at Henry, and kept his eyes fixed upon the counsel for the prosecution.

The sudden conviction of his innocence, which at the first appearance of the young man had flashed across his mind, was, I imagined, gradually giving way before the details of the accusation as the orator proceeded, who then went on to state, "that upon the morning of the 26th of August, 18—, the loss of the Sumatra, in which, by intelligence over-land, it was known Mr. Craiglethorpe had taken his passage, was published in London, with the addition that every soul on board had perished, except the mate and

one sailor, who had escaped in the long-boat and alone survived, of all who had in that manner endeavoured to escape. The details of this melancholy shipwreck it was not to his purpose to enumerate; suffice it to say, the news of the disaster reached London on that day. The paper, as he had evidence to prove, was read by the two Mr. Wilmingtons together at breakfast, soon after which Mr. Henry Wilmington, having prearranged to leave town that evening, upon an expedition connected with business in Cornwall, started with the intention of calling upon his friend in his way, and breaking the intelligence to him as best he could before his departure.

"Accordingly he arrived at Mr. Selwyn's door about half past eleven o'clock, and was let in by the house-maid, who told him that the man-servant Charles was engaged with his master, who had just had a most alarming seizure, but was now recovering and better.

"Mr. Henry Wilmington ascended the stairs

and went up to his friend's room, where he found Mr. Selwyn rallying from his attack, but extremely weak and exhausted; he was holding a paper in his hand, about which he appeared very anxious, and desirous that his servant should immediately carry it to some house in the City, and wait there till the business connected with it was arranged. My witness as to these facts not being very particularly well acquainted with business, cannot enlighten us as to the subject-matter or bearing of this paper—but that is entirely irrelevant to my case; all that it is necessary to acquaint you with is, that Mr. Selwyn was anxious Charles should go into the City directly, and that the man-servant was unwilling to leave him in his present state.

"This difficulty was, however, set at rest by Mr. Henry Wilmington in a somewhat officious manner, pressing his departure upon Charles, promising to stay with his master in his place until his return, or at least until he should be

absolutely obliged to depart by the Falmouth coach. Now, gentlemen, before I proceed further, I must call your attention to a slight but most important circumstance connected with the paper in question.

"The servant-man Charles had that morning received from Mr. Selwyn the keys of a certain drawer in a bureau, standing in the dining-room, a room where Mr. Selwyn usually received his morning visitors, with directions to open it, search for the very paper in question, and bring it up to him. In obedience to these orders, Charles goes down, opens the drawer, but not finding the paper he is sent in search of, immediately turns over several, among which he is prepared to swear he noticed the will dated as the one sworn to by Mr. Mason. Just as he had at last found it, he heard his master's bell ring violently, he snatched up the paper and endeavoured to push to the drawer, which, sticking a little, at a fresh and more violent pull from the bell, he

hurried away, leaving the drawer half open, and the keys hanging in the lock.

"The next circumstance to which I will call your attention is the departure of Charles. He went down stairs, Mr. Henry Wilmington following him, making inquiries about the patient, such inquiries as friends usually wish to make in the absence of the invalid, and this conversation continued till they got into the hall, and were at the dining-room door, then ajar, where they stood some little time talking, and then Charles went out, shutting the house-door after him, and leaving Mr. Henry Wilmington, he is ready to swear, standing at the dining-room door, looking very much agitated and affected by what he had heard.

"And here, gentlemen, we leave Mr. Henry Wilmington in full possession of the house, with the exception of the women-servants, one of whom is not forthcoming, but the other is, and it was her business to open the door in the

absence of Charles; and she is ready to swear that there was neither knock, nor ring at the bell, during the whole of that morning; and that she never let any one into the house during the whole of the period which elapsed between the departure of Charles and his return, except the butcher and baker's boys, admitted through the area-gate, she following them out and locking the gate after them, and being positive they neither of them ever that day set foot upon the kitchen-stairs.

"How long Mr. Henry Wilmington remained in the house, what he did with himself, or how he disposed of his time, is a matter he alone can account for. The chain of my evidence is taken up late in the evening, when Charles returned, found Mr. Wilmington gone, his master in a comfortable sleep; and then, suddenly recollecting the keys and the open drawer, he went down to fetch them, found the drawer shut and locked, and the keys lying upon the table.

"That drawer, gentlemen, was never again opened until after Mr. Selwyn's death, when the paper Charles saw is gone, and a new will is substituted for the one he will swear was deposited there.

"As Charles, by his master's request, put the keys into his pocket, and kept them there until, after his death, they were demanded from him, it must have been during this interval of time that the exchange was effected. I leave you to draw your own conclusions."

He then went on to state what you already know of the preamble of the will;—of Mr. Selwyn having died in ignorance of the death of his uncle, but of the damning fact that Mr. Henry Wilmington had left a letter announcing this event to him, enclosed in another to Charles, desiring him to give his master the note without fail the next morning, as soon as he awoke, lest, said he, he should be taken by surprise. This order was given in the most positive terms.

"And now, gentlemen of the jury, as if the confession of guilt upon the part of the prisoner himself were alone wanting to complete the evidence against him, I have to lay before you a letter written in the first terror of arrest, to this Mr. Craiglethorpe, the prosecutor; offering the most unlimited surrender of all the property thus feloniously obtained, upon condition of the prosecution being withdrawn. That the sense of equity and justice which this young gentleman thought proper at that moment, and for the first time, to discover in himself, was not very genuine, may be inferred from the circumstance that Mr. Craiglethorpe had been six months in England, and suffering all the privations of a man *doubly* robbed of his all by these Wilmingtons; and not the slightest offer of compromise, far less unconditional renunciation, had been tendered till the crime was discovered, and the accusation carried home to him."

The prisoner started as this subject was entered

upon, and an expression of acute pain passed over his face; but it was transient, and he composed himself once more to the attitude of deep attention which he had maintained from the time the trial had really begun.

Mr. Craiglethorpe, evidently relieved by this statement of his case,—though he had doubtless heard it all before,—drew his breath as one does when relieved from a heavy anxiety, and seemed again to venture to lift up his face to the bar.

There stood the accused—paler certainly; there was no denying that: but with the same air of serene and unaffected dignity.

He appeared perfectly prepared for the statement which would be made, and it excited no emotion; he stood there self-collected and calm.

And then, again, a wistful, doubtful expression, succeeded by a sharp expression of pain, would appear upon Craiglethorpe's anxious face; and he now turned his eyes away, and directed the whole of his attention to the continuance of the trial.

The witnesses were called. First appeared Charles, an old, withered, gray-haired, but most respectable-looking serving-man, who testified to all the facts mentioned by the counsel for the prosecution, and stood the ordeal of a cross-examination in a manner that proved to the satisfaction of every one, that he was only testifying to what he knew to be the truth.

He was followed by the young woman who officiated as under-servant in Selwyn's house, and had to attend the door when the man-servant was out.

She most positively and unequivocally deposed to her not having opened the hall-door during the whole time of Charles's absence upon the 26th, and to her positive certainty that no one but Mr. Henry Wilmington had been admitted into the house that morning, with the exception of the two boys from the butcher and baker,—who came down the area-steps, only entered the kitchen, and were by her reconducted to the area-gate, which she locked after them.

No one else she swore positively was in the house but herself, Mrs. Simcoe, the housekeeper, and Mr. Henry Wilmington.

But Mrs. Simcoe did not appear—neither for the prosecution, nor for the defence.

That she, however, could not have been guilty of the forgery was proved in two ways: first, that she could scarcely write at all, and it would have been utterly impossible for her to have executed a forgery with the neatness and correctness of the one before the court; and secondly, that she had been sitting at work in her own room that morning, and had not heard of the reported death of Mr. Craiglethorpe, nor did do so, as it happened, until the evening of that day, after the keys had been returned to Charles.

Here the case for the prosecution closed.

The court and the spectators awaited in breathless anxiety for the defence.

The counsel rose;—but his defence was rather ingenious than satisfactory,—it amounted only to

a long dissertation upon the unsatisfactory nature of constructive evidence in general,—upon the high character of the prisoner. And at this portion of his harangue, the young man who spoke became warm, animated, eloquent. He described the unblemished life—the unquestioned integrity—the high place the accused held in the eyes of every living creature with whom he was acquainted; and warned the prosecutor and the jury, in terms the most earnest and pathetic, to take care what they were about, for most assuredly a verdict in condemnation, would be to work the ruin of an innocent man.

With respect to the letter, I must not forget to say that he positively affirmed that the accused—strange as it might seem—had never received the slightest intimation of Mr. Craiglethorpe's return, till the night of his arrest.

But, strange to say, he brought no witnesses to this fact. Henry would allow of none to be called. There were only three people living who could

give positive evidence upon this point—his father, his wife, and his sister.

His father was lying upon the bed of his agony, quite incapable of appearing in a court of justice; —and Harry shrunk from exposing his wife or his sister to the agony of a cross-examination, under such circumstances.

There had been reason too to hope that the letter would not be put in;—this, and the conscious terror of discovery, which paralyzed every effort made by his legal advisers in his defence, had decided him to be passive under this accusation; and the counsel for the prosecution found little difficulty in replying to such a defence. He pointed out how weak must be the reliance upon facts, when the oratory of his honourable friend was chiefly applied to dissuade the jury from relying upon facts. He affirmed, in opposition to the affirmation of the counsel for the prisoner, that a more perfect chain of constructive evidence never was, never could be, presented against any man

inasmuch as it proved to demonstration, that the paper must have been forged by some one in possession of the fact of Mr. Craiglethorpe's death, during a certain space of time, in which space of time it was demonstrably impossible any living creature but the accused could have accomplished the deed.

"If the evidence in this case does not amount to conviction, we may henceforth and for ever have done with circumstantial evidence in any possible case," concluded he. "No defence can avail the prisoner, unless he can give proof that some other person capable of this delicate imitation of another's hand was in the house during the time that the witnesses deposed he was alone, or at least can account for his own time, and show that he was *not* in the dining-room during that period;—at all events for a sufficient length of time to have accomplished a work which must at least have employed a couple of hours. Neither

of which things he has even made the slightest attempt to do—and why? Evidently why—because he cannot do it—he cannot attempt it—he knows he cannot, without furnishing arms to the prosecution; because, gentlemen, to enter into details in the attempt to disguise or conceal a fact, inevitably, and invariably lends means for the discovery and demonstration of the truth of that fact.

"Gentlemen of the jury, I leave the case in your hands, without the shadow of a doubt as to the result."

The judge was beginning his charge, when there was a bustle in a remote corner of the court.

A young lady had fainted, and must be carried out. A gentleman was seen bearing her in his arms; she was dressed in deep mourning, and followed by another lady dressed in a similar manner.

The prisoner did not even turn his eyes that

way;—they were fixed upon the judge, as were the falcon eyes of Mr. Craiglethorpe, with a gravity—a solemn—deep gravity, which was indeed a remarkable change, from the expression of face with which he had entered the court.

The judge, in a voice which he seemed to find it difficult to steady and compose to the calm dignity and authority of the office and the occasion, was beginning his charge, when there was a fresh interruption.

Suddenly, as if impelled by an invisible feeling, Mr. Craiglethorpe rose, and addressing the judge, said,

"My Lord, one moment;—may I be allowed to speak? I do *not* believe the prisoner at the bar to be guilty."

There was a general sensation through the court.

"What has that gentleman to say?" said the judge, with gravity; "and who is he? If he had anything to allege in favour of the defence—if he

could merely speak to character even, why was he not in the witness-box?"

The agitation of Mr. Craiglethorpe seemed increasing.

"Let me speak now," said he.

"Have you any past circumstances to bring forward?—This is certainly irregular; yet rather than the prisoner should not have the benefit of every possible circumstance in his favour, let this gentleman be put in the witness-box and examined."

"It is unnecessary to do that," said Mr. Craiglethorpe, his agitation subsiding, and a kind of gloomy embarrassment coming over him, as he thus suddenly found himself the mark upon which all the eyes of the court were fixed; "I have been wrong—I know some of the circumstances.—All I can say is, I came into this court as the prosecutor of that young man; I leave it with the deepest conviction that he is innocent. Jurymen, listen to me, and for the love of God believe me."

This was said in a kind of agony of earnestness, as, rising from his seat, and apparently incapable of longer enduring the scene before him, he rose and left the court.

Every one was moved—every one beheld in the sort of instinctive conviction of the prosecutor, a confirmation of their own.

People whispered;—hope again brightened the countenances of the compassionate spectators, and all eyes were directed to the judge.

They looked for a favourable change, the conviction of innocence had found a responsive feeling in every heart,—which they expected to find expressed in the charge. But no;—the evidence was too strong. The grave and conscientious judge sat there, not to be influenced by enthusiasm, imagination, or feeling—but to sift and decide upon the evidence of truth.

However reluctant—however deeply reluctant—it was impossible to resist the evidence; it amounted, as far as circumstantial evidence ever

can amount, to absolute demonstration. There was not even a bare hypothesis offered by the defence, to account for the undeniable fact—there could not be a doubt as to the guilt of the accused; his own denial and the high-minded character he had hitherto held were the only answer to this damning array of facts.

The summing-up was patient, merciful—but against the prisoner; the jury retired for a few moments, and returned with a verdict of—

GUILTY!

There was a burst as of sorrow from all present. The judge, his deep feeling written in his face, but with a grave, authoritative voice, commanded, "Silence through the court;" and then, after a pause, during which it was evident he was endeavouring to master his voice, addressed the prisoner.

A few feeling and pathetic words upon the painful sight of one bearing so high a character for rectitude, conscientiousness, and disinterestedness,

having forfeited it under the sudden temptation of a moment;—a few brief words upon the vice of covetousness and an undue desire for money—and the heavy sentence of the law was pronounced, in a voice which, in spite of all his efforts, was heard to falter.

The prisoner, who had preserved an attitude of calm but deeply serious attention during the whole of the trial—except that a flash of sudden joy had brightened his face at the interruption of Mr. Craiglethorpe—made a grave bow as the sentence was concluded, and, turning calmly to the jailer, was conducted out of court.

CHAPTER XVII.

The old man had hurried out of the court, but he could not go home; he could not bear to leave the precincts of the Old Bailey till he had learned the final sentence. He waited there in the outer hall, half-hidden behind one of the pillars, waiting in speechless distress for news. There was a buzz of voices; he put his head forward;—people were coming out of court—they were talking in much

agitation;—he listened as if his life lay in the next sentence.

"Poor fellow!—guilty—found guilty"—struck upon his ear.

At that moment a hackney-coach drew up to the door, and from an inner room a gentleman, with two ladies, came forth, dressed in deep mourning.—One a young and beautiful creature, quite a girl—so fair, and so fragile—her bonnet off, her long hair falling over his arm—was carried by the gentleman, to all appearance dead, but with a look of woe upon her pallid face that haunted his pillow for years; the other, tall and majestic, followed. She happened to turn her eye full upon him as he passed—the deepest melancholy, the profound, deathlike calm of despair, was within in it. It was the beautiful, appalling countenance of the Medusa; and he felt as if he were turned to stone.

"His young wife and his sister!" he heard somebody muttering near him.

He could bear it no longer, but rushed forth into the street. Yes, he had got his object; he was revenged—his malignant passions were all gratified. Yes, yes! justice had overtaken the criminal. Oh, yes! he was revenged!

Oh, justice! justice! Oh, vengeance! vengeance!

Yes, the justice and the vengeance divine had fastened upon one great and real criminal,—the man who had rejoiced in another's fall.

"Because thou saidst Aha! against my sanctuary when it was profaned. Aha! she is broken that was the gates of my people. Thus saith the Lord God, Howl ye. Woe worth the day."

He hurried along the streets—driven as by the whips of the Furies—the cruel furies, that lie sleeping till the deed is done, and then start up and raise the quivering lash of serpents—and follow like the wretched Orestes, the man far more guilty. He shed a mother's blood for justice,

—cruelly, unnaturally. But what is cruel, what unnatural, like the man who triumphs and rejoices in another's detection in crime?

Conscience—the recollection of all his iniquitous triumph—his barbarous satisfaction—his exultation in the detection, the pursuit, and the arrest of the man he hated, both for his father's sake, still more than for his own—conscience awoke, and presented her terrible visions to his mind.

That young man,—standing there at the bar,—at his arraignment, wearing in his every look the unquestionable, the undoubted stamp of innocence—innocence of which a strong intuitive impression upon his own mind, every time he looked, acquired fresh force. He shut his eyes, he could not shut it out, and then passed by that lovely pale girl, insensible, but with such a face of woe; and then the dark gloomy despair written in that beautiful Medusa face of the sister, as it turned full upon him.

He ran along the streets heeding no one,—running against people here and there,—blinded by misery, and stumbling along, till he got, some way or other, home. And then he hurried up to his own little chamber, locked and double-locked the door, threw himself upon the bed, and groaned and cried aloud.

She was not dead. They carried her through the fresh air to the coach, and as the breeze played upon her temples she gave signs of life. Mr. Kingston, with a tenderness the most solicitous, but with his face filled with sorrowful gravity, supported her in his arms till they stopped at a chemist's shop; and here he, with the still speechless Caroline, carried her in, and the proper remedies were applied, which restored her to herself.

Her eyes opened, sense and motion returned. She rose, tottered a step or two, and flinging herself into Caroline's arms, they embraced without a tear.

And then Caroline begged that the coach might draw up, and they returned whence they came. Mr. Kingston again put them into the coach, and having given the coachman orders to return to Newgate, followed them into the carriage.

They arrived at the prison. The unavoidable delay had been such that Henry had arrived there before them.

They were led into the condemned cell.

It was a narrow place, and the dim light fell

through the grated windows upon the pallet-bed and scanty furniture. He was sitting upon his bed when they entered, lightly fettered,—a measure of custom, not of security,—and as he rose the slight metallic sound of his chain was heard; but he came forward,—then, with a sweet tranquil smile upon his countenance, and taking each, one after the other, by the hand, kissed them with a sort of solemn tenderness.

They were solemn, tender, and quiet too.

The immensity of the misfortune seemed to fill the mind and heart,—to overwhelm as with a flood. There was room, there was inclination, for neither lamentation nor tears.

They all three sat down, without speaking, upon the side of the bed, Henry between the two beloved of his heart. Flavia was again encircled in one arm,—hers was round him, her head leaning upon his breast. His other arm was thrown round Caroline, who sat there with her eyes fixed upon his face.

She did not speak, but she looked at him with a doubtful, asking, hesitating, perplexed look,—as much as to say, Are we right? Can this be right?

And his eye answered, with gentle firmness,—Yes.

After a little time thus passed, when they were becoming a little more calm,—for what is there in human life, however monstrous and terrific, that the mind of man does not in a manner reconcile itself to—when it *must?*—we fret against the doubtful, we submit to the inevitable; Henry began to speak, and to say,—

"My loves, this does not come upon me unexpectedly, nor, I think, upon you; and I have thought very much upon what I believed must be the event of this day, and have endeavoured to look upon it, as it is in truth, but as a short parting, if it pleases the Lord of Life to call me away,—the manner, my pretty love," kissing his poor Flavia, "is but a trifling consideration. If

I were about to die of sickness, you would be very sorry to lose me, but you would submit. Forget the horror of this way of leaving the world; it comes to the same thing."

"Ah! Ah!" said the poor young thing, shuddering.

"Don't let us think of that, love; a short passage of anguish, and then think of me as you do think of me; I know and trust that Word, which, however in our prosperity and joy we may be insensible to the true, real value of, we fly to in the day of distress, and find in it light and support. Nothing but a firm conviction of the aims and purposes of this life; that it is, indeed, a field of struggle and trial, by which those faculties alone are and can be developed, which fit and prepare us for a purer and higher system of existence; nothing but this conviction, deeply impressed upon the mind, can bear a man through the dark passages of life unhurt. Courage, fortitude, firmness,—nay, indifference and insensibi-

lity,—may help him to endure with the bravery of a stoic; but nothing but the everlasting hope can make death smile; yes, my sweetest love, smile,—when it is met for the sake of duty and love."

Thus he talked to them gently and tenderly, and his words flowed like balm upon the anguish of their wounds; and by-and-bye they were able all to kneel down together in prayer, and the divine spirit of consolation visited their hearts; and the terrors and the shadows of death were softened to a pale and tender melancholy,—a soft twilight, as of falling evening upon the world.

But a character such as Henry had earned for himself during a life spent as his had been, is not an empty, futile thing.

Every heart within the sphere of its influence

answers to the claim upon its sympathies, when the excellent of the earth fall into sudden and inexplicable difficulties. The evidence was incontrovertible, but the sense of mankind went not with the verdict. Not a single circumstance was put forwards to impugn it, and yet not one creature was satisfied. Judge, jury, counsel for the prosecution, shared, in spite of themselves, in the general dissatisfaction, and writhed uneasily under the thought that Henry Wilmington must suffer.

And yet no one seemed to have energy sufficient to attempt to avert his fate.

People are sadly too prone to acquiesce in what they deplore, when, according to the common course of things, no means present themselves to avert the doom.

But there are more warm and ardent natures who resist to the death the course of evil, and never allow the terrible wrong to be effected till

they have spent the last drop of their blood, the last effort of their spirit, to avert it.

Lord George, with all his faults, was of this generous, high-spirited temper.

He had a direct, positive, clear way of viewing things, which led him often right, when others stumbled and blundered, and an undying energy, which, if often misdirected, was at moments such as this, invaluable.

He had arrived in town from abroad upon the very evening of the trial, and found all the world excited by the subject;—nothing else was spoken of, wherever he went.

Excessively surprised, shocked, astonished, he was, so was everybody else, but he was more than that;—they, many of them, knew the man, and marvelled over and lamented his fate; he knew the man well, and was positive that the truth of the charge was impossible.

He believed in moral impossibilities; the in-

stinct of his own heart assured him there were contradictions in character which cannot exist.

He heeded not the chain of circumstances which involved him. Harry Wilmington, he knew, was incapable of a mean and despicable crime, and he was certain he had not been guilty of it; I believe, if he had seen him with the actual pen in hand, and paper before him, with which the false instrument had been completed, he would have disbelieved his own eyesight, but not the innocence of the man he esteemed.

Oh! that men in general, and in the smaller affairs of life, had this generous confidence in consistency of character, how many misapprehensions, back-bitings, distrusts and severances, might be spared.

But what was to be done?

Nothing.

So reasoned every one,—even the miserable Craiglethorpe himself; and left the unhappy victim of crimes not his own merely lamenting his fate.

But not so thought this ardent-minded, generous young man. Certain of his innocence, the first thing to be done, was at least to obtain time,—to delay the horrible fate even for a day, was to gain something. A reprieve,—that, at least, might be granted to his earnest prayers and representations.

An old lady, dressed in an invalid dress, muffled up to the chin, her feet in quilted silk shoes stretched out upon her footstool, before a comfortable fire, reclined, rather than sat in a luxurious arm-chair, in an old fashioned but very handsomely furnished apartment, in a remote part of the county of Northumberland.

A district quite out of the world, as people called it, and as indeed in their sense it most truly was.

There was no town of any consideration within

a dozen miles. There was not another house, above the huts of the peasantry and miners, within five or six miles, except one or two here and there, which might belong to the overseers and higher authorities connected with this outlying iron and coal district; I believe, at that time, a more wild and solitary district did not exist in England,—I don't know how it may be now.

The bare mountains stretched far and wide on all sides,—a labyrinth of dells and steeps, bare, treeless, and dismal;—but you are too impatient to want further description of this old lady's abode; nor need I give you a history of her life, or why she chose to dwell in this dreary, solitary, place,—because it was her own, and that she had inherited it from a long line of ancestry, and was a very proud, unsociable humourist, and kept as much aloof from the ways of a modern world—she hated, feared, and despised—as possible; enough for my purpose, that so it was, and that

there she had lived for many, many years, till she had grown very old, and very infirm, and she could no longer suffice to herself or look after her own affairs.

This old lady had lost her housekeeper, and Mrs. Simcoe, Selwyn's housekeeper, who had, as I have said, been placed by Mr. Wilmington in a situation in a remote part of the north, her mistress dying shortly, after various changes of situation, heard of the place, applied for it, and obtained it.

The salary was ample—the solitude not alarming to one who cared nothing for society; there she had remained, buried, as far as the living world was concerned, with this recluse old lady, sharing in her cares for her pet dogs and poultry, assisting to manage her household and little farm, with which she amused herself—never seeing a book, rarely a newspaper even,—perfectly ignorant, and equally indifferent as to the course of things.

Mrs. Simcoe found herself soon habituated, and equally contented with this course of life, and as she never wrote letters, not having the pen of a ready-writer, if write she could at all, which has been doubted, and as the Wilmingtons had been busy with far other interests, the old servant, comfortably provided for, had long since dropped out of their minds, and they had quite lost sight of her; indeed, such had been her various changes that with none of her old friends was any trace of her remaining.

She was sitting opposite to the old lady now, busily employed in knitting a rug for Crab, her mistress's crossest and most favoured canine pet. The rain beat against the windows, and the wind blew, and it sounded very dreary without, and the old lady dosed, and grumbled in her chair, but without any ill-humour against her friend, whom she loved and valued very much.

The door opened, and an old serving-man, who

had been unnumbered years in the family, entered in his riding dress.

He had been to make purchases at the distant market town, and he came with the usual waiter, with change for bank-notes, and all sorts of little bottles, and parcels—such as old ladies usually have to send for when any one goes to town; and having rendered his accounts in a low tone, lest he should disturb his mistress, he concluded by producing a newspaper.

Mrs. Simcoe, though she could very well exist without newspapers, yet always, like every other recluse, was glad enough to hear a little news; and John, when he went once a month or fortnight to town, usually indulged her by bringing one back.

"Well, I'm very glad you've brought me the 'Times,' said she, "it has such a great deal in it; and one's glad now and then of a bit of news."

"I brought it to-day, ma'am, because they were

all saying as how the best report of the great trial everybody's a talking on, is to be found in it."

"What great trial? You never told me a word of it."

"Why, ma'am, it's the first I ever heerd of it myself, though I'm rather fond of trials. I think they're often some of the curiousest things in life, particularly about wills. I've heard such strange stories about them sort of things, and the finding out the forgeries and so on with the mark in a bit of paper, or a seal instead of a wafer, or a candle that a man had, or not, in his hand. But this ain't so wonderful as those, only for the high previous character of the gentleman condemned; and what happened in the court,—it's enough to draw tears, ma'am. I thought you'd like to read it.'

He gave her the paper; and she stooped down by the blazing fire, and began to turn it about.

"That page, ma'am—there it is. 'The King *versus* Wilmington.'"

"Good gracious me!" and she eagerly fastened

upon the page. She read it with an eagerness and impatience which hardly allowed her to dwell upon the circumstances of the case; above all, she devoured the words of the defence: and at once the conviction, the certainty, that Henry Wilmington was, must be, unjustly accused and convicted, seized her mind—she had not the slightest doubt of that fact; and she grew pale, and her eyes were distended with horror, at the idea of so dreadful a fate.

She loved Henry Wilmington devotedly. He had been her best, her only friend, when she was in the deepest affliction, helpless, and abandoned, as it were, by all the world—he had rescued her from misery—had enabled her to provide helps and comforts for her sick and dying daughter—had placed her in an honourable situation near his friend; and in the daily intercourse thus arising, had proved himself, by a thousand acts, the kindest, the most considerate, the most generous of mankind. True, she had lately lost sight of

him; but who's fault was that?—only her own, her dislike to writing. And now, this excellent young man, this pious, this generous, this honourable being was about die a horrible death as a criminal.

Her agitation was so excessive, that she was some time before she could collect her thoughts sufficiently to proceed; till at last, prompted by that earnest curiosity with which the attention is rivetted, and the mind seems forced to pursue the details of such a case, however painful, she continued her perusal, and read the reply of the council for the prosecution, and the charge of the judge.

The charge, which was extremely well and clearly given by the reporter for the paper she held in her hand, arrested her attention.

She was a remarkably acute, clear-headed woman. The counsel for the prosecution had said, "No defence can avail the prisoner, unless he, who by the evidence produced, is proved to

have been alone of all in the house at the time, capable of so delicate an imitation of another's hand, can show that this was not the fact, that any one else besides himself entered that dining-room during that precise period, or can prove undeniably that he himself was not there; neither of which points is there the shadow of an attempt upon the part of the defence to prove."

This speech and the charge, which was a most lucid detail of the circumstantial evidence, which in the opinion of the judge amounted as nearly as possible to demonstration, twice, thrice, she read over with a beating heart. The mention of her own home startled her,—first she was thankful that she could hardly write at all, and blessed the circumstance as she saw it mentioned,—then her not being summoned as evidence was mentioned, terrified at the idea of appearing in any character in a court of justice, she could not help rejoicing in her obscurity, when it suddenly occurred to her what evidence, had she been summoned, she could have given?

What, in fact, of the events of that morning could she have recollected?

She reflected for a few moments.

She had never thought of the events of that morning from that day to this; for though one or two had seemed to her odd at the time, she had connected them with nothing, and they had excited no further attention.

But now suddenly, as if illuminated by a flash of light, they recurred to her mind.

She dropped the newspaper, clasped her hand, and started from her chair uttering a faint cry.

"What's the matter?" said the dozing old lady; "I wish you wouldn't disturb me so," and turning her head upon the cushion resumed her dose.

Mrs. Simcoe sank back again into her seat.

The idea that Harry Wilmington was guilty, she from the first moment had discarded from her mind as impossible. Now the expression used by the judge in his charge, that there was not an attempt to account for the undeniable fact in any

other manner; not a suspicion offered that any one else could have been guilty of it, struck her still more forcibly. That another, whom to her astonishment she found never once mentioned, had actually been in the house that morning, was the first recollection that awoke a whole train of circumstances, as it were, in her mind,—that he might, that he could be, the conviction gathered strength with every fresh reflection, that he *was* the real criminal.

And then, as if a mist had cleared away, all became revealed clearly to her mind: she saw, she comprehended the whole story,—the courageous piety of the innocent son, the guilt, the infamous cowardice of the vain and unprincipled father.

She knew both the men well, and the fact was to her demonstrated.

But could anything be done? Was it, or was it not, yet too late?

She was a woman of energy, much active virtue, and a strong sense of justice. She possessed the

means to convict the real criminal, and exonerate the innocent victim: if too late to save his life, his memory should yet be spared.

On the eventful day upon which the fate of so many depended, Mrs. Simcoe was sitting at her work in a small sort of closet-room, at the end of the passage, and which, having a glass-door, commanded a view of the street and parlour-doors; though the passage being a long one, a person sitting there could not hear any conversation that might happen to pass in the hall, except it was in a very loud voice.

She was that day engaged in mending house linen. She recollected perfectly the occasion, and the reason for her having settled herself there. Her master had had a bad seizure about eight o'clock that morning; and though he was now better, and her attendance dispensed with, she had brought her work to this place, as more in the way if wanted than if in her room on the basement story.

She distinctly remembered the bell ringing and a knock at the door about eleven o'clock; that Charles opened the door, and let in Mr. Henry Wilmington, who immediately went up to her master's room.

She saw Charles come down, followed by young Mr. Wilmington, who seemed to be giving him directions. Charles went out; Mr. Henry Wilmington remained a short time walking up and down the hall, as if musing,—it might be about five minutes,—when there was another knock at the door. She was rising to answer it, when she saw Mr. Henry Wilmington, who was standing by, open the door, and Mr. Wilmington senior come in, seeming in haste. A few words passed, on which Mr. Henry seemed in much grief; Mr. Wilmington went into the dining-parlour, and Mr. Henry very hastily again ran up stairs.

She had left some dinner-napkins which she wished to look over on the dining-room sideboard-drawer, and it might be about half an hour after

this that she went to the room to fetch them. She found the door locked; on trying the lock, a voice she knew to be Mr. Wilmington's asked who was there, but upon her begging pardon for the interruption and going away, no further notice was taken. About an hour after this, she heard Mr. Henry Wilmington coming down stairs; the dining-room door was unlocked, and Mr. Wilmington came out and met his son in the hall.

Mr. Henry seemed in a great hurry, as well as his father, calling out that he should lose the coach; and snatching up his hat, and throwing his great-coat over his arm, he almost ran out of the house, —upon which Mr. Wilmington shut the door after him, and returned to the dining-room, locking the door again.

In about two hours' more, she heard him softly unlock the room-door, creep out in a stealthy manner, and let himself out of the house, shutting the house-door in so noiseless a way, that she perfectly well remembered going to the lock, to

satisfy herself that it had really been fastened, after which she went into the dining-room, and distinctly remembered that all the drawers in the bureau were shut, and the bunch of keys was lying upon the table.

Thus by a curious chain of those small circumstances by which truth is demonstrated, it was proved, that so far from having had leisure to accomplish the crime, Harry Wilmington, from the time he had heard of Mr. Craiglethorpe's death, until the day of the funeral, when he entered it to hear the will read, had never once been in that room, where alone the paper could possibly have been executed, and that his innocence was clear as the sun at noonday.

The course of this world is not altogether, yet upon the average, after all, retributive. Not in vain does a man lead a just and honourable life—not useless are the esteem and gratitude of those whom he has frequented. Circumstances are often most unpropitious; and in one sense the wisdom

of Solomon appears true, that there is one event to the good and to the wicked. It is not according to the course of the present world's government, as far as we can understand it, that what we may call the blind forces of the imposed natural laws, or the still blinder workings, as they seem to us, of chance and accident, should swerve aside, in condescension to the great spiritual and moral laws of desert and justice; but there are moral laws themselves which, spiritual and impalpable as they are, act with still more imperative force upon the fate of human beings, even in this world, than even the inexorable material laws with which we find ourselves surrounded.

The chain of fatal circumstances, and his own admirable piety, had brought the innocent and excellent man to this dreadful doom; but the force of that character he had acquired for himself, the strength of that esteem and affection his generous and disinterested temper had excited among the few who knew him personally, was such, that

the law was arrested in its course—its terrible, irresistible march was stopped—that dread abstraction was forced to pause before the still mightier force of that universal opinion that declared her sentence, however founded, unjust, because crime by such a man was impossible.

The energy of persuasion with which Lord George pleaded for a reprieve, in order to afford time for a further investigation of circumstances, the agony of entreaty with which Mr. Craiglethorpe seconded him, the universal feeling in every one acquainted with the parties, exercised an influence to which there was a moral impossibility that the persons with whom the decision of this matter lay should not yield.

A reprieve was granted.

The same certainty, the same absolute positive

conviction, brought the avenger of blood up from the remote and distant corner where she lay secluded.

Mrs. Simcoe, shuddering with horror at the idea of the fate awaiting her benefactor, too impatient to lose a moment,—an earnest, determined woman, whom no difficulty could deter from what she thought her duty,—having collected her thoughts a little, arranged the circumstances as she recollected them by degrees, and convinced that she possessed evidence sufficient to save this admirable man from this cruel fate,—sensible that an instant was not to be lost, rose from her chair, and proceeded to the unheard-of daring of awaking Mrs. Widdington from her doze.

It was as good as her place was worth.

The selfish old lady was excessively cross at being disturbed, and would have been so at any accident that might have produced such inconvenience; but she was deeply offended, and her pride all in arms, at the idea that any one, far less

her humble attendant, should have ventured upon such an audacious step, with regard to her.

She lifted up her head from the cushion and looked terribly angry.

"All is lost," thought poor Mrs. Simcoe; "but what does that matter, may I but obtain the means of reaching the Great North Road, and send an express to London, which I will follow as speedily as possible myself."

"Madam," she began, in a tone of entreaty, "only listen to me a few words, I beseech you."

But it was long before the offended old woman could be brought to listen.

At length Mrs. Simcoe gained her ear, and soon, to her unspeakable delight, found she had excited her interest.

The tale of so much goodness, so much piety, unjustly sentenced for another's crime, was briefly told; but it was of a nature to arouse every right feeling in the human breast,—that natural sense of justice, which is perhaps the strongest and most

enduring among any which we may class as the *natural* moral sentiments—was aroused.

Such a tale—of a man so admirable, thus involved, through mistaken circumstances and his own filial piety,—of the contrast between the character and the fate of such a being,—told with its full effect upon a mind but rarely called upon to think of or sympathize with others, but in which the better part of our nature rather slumbered from inaction, then was utterly lost. Her impatience, when she understood the state of the case, almost equalled that of Mrs. Simcoe herself; her horses, her servants, her well-filled purse were at once placed at her friend's disposal.

The old lady seemed quite revived by the delightful sensation of awakened benevolence, by the idea of assisting in so righteous and pious a work, as she walked across the floor with alacrity, unlocked her bureau, filled a large purse with guineas, and a pocket-book with bank-notes, and pressing them into Mrs. Simcoe's hands, bid God

bless her enterprise, and told her to spare no expense, and when she wanted more money, to send for it at once, and she should have it.

"Heartily—heartily!" was the word.

Mrs. Simcoe, in less than an hour was on her way, leaving Mrs. Widdington sitting upright in her chair,—more alive, more excited, more content, more cheerful than she had been for years; whilst the housemaid made her tea and toast, with a sort of trembling joy at her mistress' good humour.

Help was at hand for the innocent. The avenging spirit had already stricken the guilty. It was Caroline's painful, almost insupportable task, to pass from the calm presence of the man about to die, to that of the real criminal, who had escaped. She had to announce the event of the

trial to the distracted man, racked by mental and bodily pain, torn by all the agonies which cowardice, remorse, and the horrible anguish of a heart which had a father's feelings—yet was altogether wanting in a father's generosity and courage. He turned and tossed—a ghastly spectacle—upon his bed, unable even to lift his eyes and look upon that daughter, who, pale as marble, and almost as motionless, stood with dry and tearless eyes, before him.

A strong mind and a feeling heart would have broken sooner than did his. The struggles of the feeble in such a case are more enduring. Two days and two nights, this wretched man—a prey to horror and despair—lay stretched upon that dreadful bed; whilst his wife, perfectly bewildered at this catastrophe—of the true history of which she was, it must be said, perfectly unsuspicious—waited upon him, or ran and hid herself in her room, to strain handkerchiefs round her aching head, and groan in helpless misery. She was too

utterly benumbed and bewildered, even to give way to her usual selfishness; she seemed as if she hardly knew what she did.

The day originally fixed for the awful sentence of the law to take effect, Mr. Wilmington expired.

The strong-minded and pious daughter had watched through this dreadful scene. It was vain to urge upon her father to have recourse to that spiritual assistance from another—from which he shrunk with that kind of aversion which men, who have neglected all serious preparation for eternity during their lives, too often display at the hour of death; but it would appear that she had herself attempted the difficult task of endeavouring to excite some better feelings in the departing soul, and that to a certain degree she had succeeded in awakening some sense of his true situation. He died, with more calmness than might have been expected, blessing his children.

Did Caroline take advantage of the opportunity thus afforded to obtain a confession of his guilt?

To rend aside that veil which the piety of the generous son had thrown over a criminal father?

What would you have done in such a case?

I would have done what Caroline did.

She, after one of her long conversations with her father, dictated to him a confession of the truth, which she wrote out and read over to him. She took the precaution to have it signed in the presence of one or two of the upper servants, ignorant of its contents. She had their signatures appended. She then, in their presence, sealed up the paper in a cover, and directing it to Mr. Wilkinson, with a request that he would keep it for her till she demanded it, dispatched it immediately by the butler, who had not left the room till the business was completed.

She resolved to make use of it, if necessary, to rescue her brother.

But Mrs. Simcoe's arrival in town rendered so painful a step unnecessary. Her evidence was laid before the Home Office. Not a doubt could remain as to the real criminal. To publish the father's guilt was but to punish, under another form, the innocent victims of his follies and his crimes. A full pardon was granted to Henry, with the addition that there being reason to be convinced, without the shadow of a doubt, that he was innocent of the crime alleged, and the prosecutor having earnestly represented and deplored the error under which he had acted, a full and free pardon,—all the reparation the law could make to an unjustly condemned man,—was granted.

Henry, and his wife, and his sister, retired to

their beloved seclusion. Time, with its soft and healing hand, gradually effaced the cruel history; but sin leaves traces indelible in our mysterious life. The father's sins cast their shadow over the children.

There was a subdued gravity, a certain composed seriousness, about them all, when I saw them some years after.

They always lived retired; but they were deeply and tenderly beloved by all who knew them; and the example of their lives has left behind it, in that remote county where they dwelt, a bright impression, which has not yet worn out, and which to this day exercises a most beneficial effect upon the circle of its influence.

THE END.

LONDON: PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SON, ST MARTIN'S LANE.

POPULAR NEW NOVELS AND ROMANCES, PUBLISHED BY MR. COLBURN.

THE WILMINGTONS.

By the Author of "Emilia Wyndham," "Mordaunt Hall," &c. 3 vols.

"It argues well for the character of a people when, in their popular literature, the good is ever found in association with the beautiful: and we regard the eminent success of this author's works as a very favourable attestation of the soundness of our public opinion. The author is indisputably a writer of true genius and of great power, but is also one who dedicates high endowments to the service of Him who has given them. The popularity of such a writer is creditable to a people—the productions of such a writer must necessarily exert a beneficial influence over a people prepared to prize them. They all bear the impress of sterling English morality—all minister to generous emotions, generous scorn of what is base, generous admiration of excellence; and all inculcate respect for principle, by which emotions ought to be governed—all minister to the exaltation of justice."—*Dublin University Magazine.*

LEONARD NORMANDALE;

OR, THE THREE BROTHERS.

By the Hon. C. Stuart Savile. 3 vols.

VALERIE.

By Captain Marryat. 2 vols.

"Like all Captain Marryat's productions, these volumes abound in variety of incident and in the exhibition of human nature under extraordinary phases. By every possessor of Captain Marryat's former works, 'Valerie' will be received as an acceptable legacy."—*Naval and Military Gazette.*

PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF

MRS. MARGARET MAITLAND,

OF SUNNYSIDE.

Written by herself. 3 vols.

"The most gratifying work of its class since the great delineator of Scottish manners ceased to exist."—*Tait's Magazine.*

"This work has given us much pleasure. Mrs. Maitland might claim cousinship with the Rev. Micah Balwhidder."—*Athenæum.*

THE MAID OF ORLEANS.

By the Author of "Whitefriars," "Owen Tudor," &c. 3 vols.

"An excellent novel. The character of the 'Maid of Orleans' is drawn with a glow and fervour, a mixture of elevation and simplicity, which are alike powerful and attractive.—*Athenæum.*

"A romance of surpassing interest, rarely equalled for vigour, brilliancy, pathos, and dignity of style.—*Weekly Chronicle.*

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 000 130 310 6